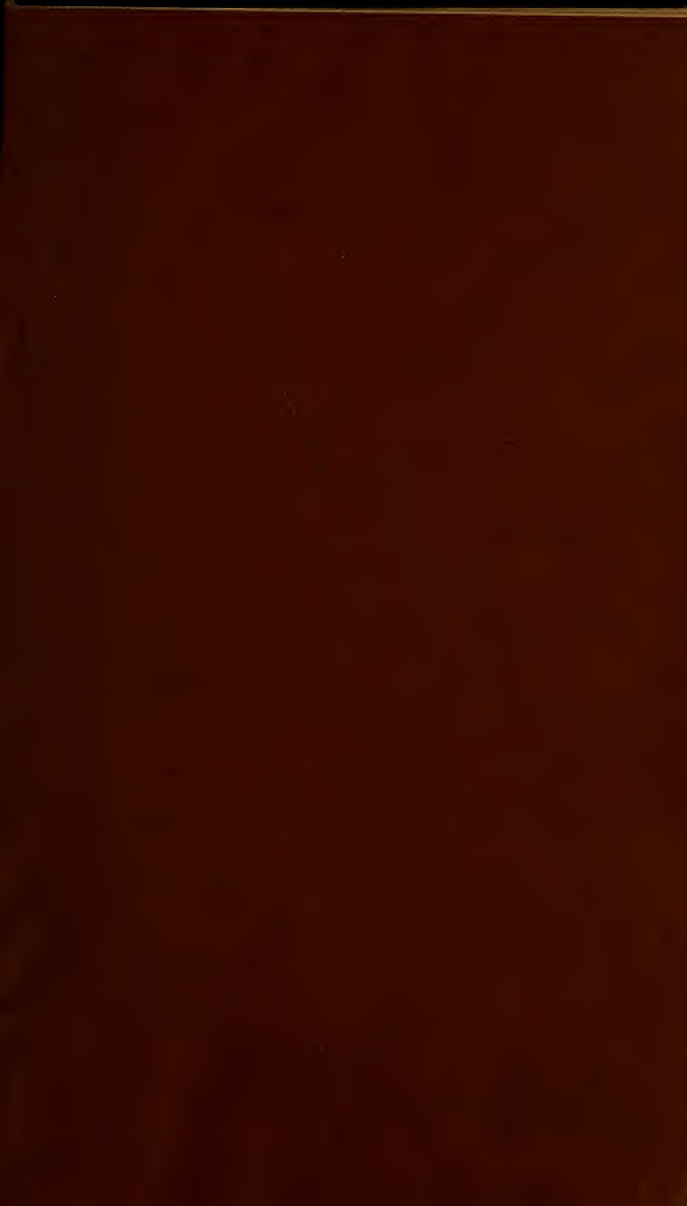


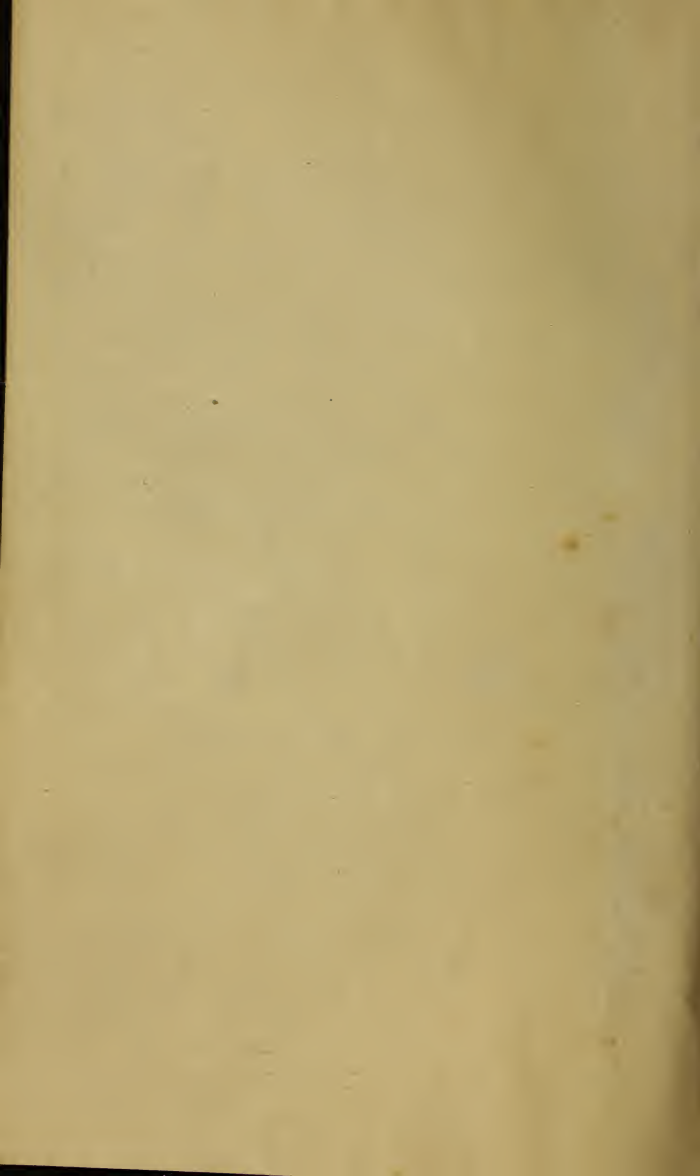
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LILTS
ON THE
DORIC LYRE.







LILTS ON THE ÞORIC LYRE.



L I L T S

ON THE

D O R I C L Y R E :

A COLLECTION OF

HUMOROUS POEMS AND VERSIFIED SKETCHES

OF

SCOTTISH MANNERS AND CHARACTER.

BY

ALEX. G. MURDOCH.

(1)

*"Auld chimes an' auld rhymes
Gar us think on auld times."*

OLD SCOTCH PROVERB.

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P R E F A C E.

THE phenomenon of a Scottish artizan challenging public attention by casting a poetic glove at the feet of criticism has long since lost the gloss of novelty. The ages repeat themselves; and the restless wheel of life, which, in its infinite gyrations casts up everything odd as well as common, periodically discovers to the eyes of men the unique side of literature—when, lo, from a shining spoke of the wheel, off leaps the working-man poet—cap in hand, and with a bundle of rhymes to the fore. Well, it seems a necessity that it should be so. Think ye not the swarthy brows of toil worthy of invigorating and appreciative song? And if the manhood of labour is to be sung at all, gifted with the requisite enthusiasm, the practical son of toil is surely the man to do it, and not the ideal outsider who indulges a remote and bird's-eye view of the restless activities of the modern workshop through a literary eye-glass, and esteems himself qualified to “do up the business,” forsooth. Not at all. Such artistic handling of the hammer won't do. In the lyric entitled “Breeks o' Hodden Grey,” and elsewhere, I have drawn from the rich armoury of facts and daily experiences, such massive and glowing imagery as the factory, the dockyard, the forge, and the furnace afford; and I feel proud to think that the fidelity of the pictures will appeal to hundreds of my fellow-workmen on the Clyde, and elsewhere.

As a working-man, I frankly accept the destiny of toil as an honourable and enviable privilege, repudiating the effervescent gingerbeer oratory of the paid agent of Trades' Unionism, who

enlarges on the wrongs and grievances affecting our social condition, which abuses, by the way, press so lightly on our senses that we have to be periodically reminded of their existence.

In the selection and elaboration of themes, I have not meddled much with the romance of idealism. The whole book, in fact, is toned with a localism of scenery, incident, and character—peculiar, perhaps, to the condition of one who has never lived out of Glasgow a whole week in his life, and who honestly esteems the English rose as being only less beautiful than the Scotch thistle, and the blue skies of Italy the finest skies in the world—Scottish skies excepted.

Finally, I dedicate my little book to the manly keeping of my brethren in toil, the engineers of the Clyde, assured that, if there is to be found therein, aught that reflects the intelligence, sturdy independence, and moral worth characteristic of our class, these rhymes shall neither be cursorily dismissed nor lie negligently unread.

ALEX. G. MURDOCH.

7 Campbellfield Street,
GLASGOW, *May*, 1873.

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L I L T S

ON THE

D O R I C L Y R E.



The Waukrife Lykewake.

THE rose-licht o' my younger time,
Lies roun' me like a glow o' rhyme ;
My heart is fu' o' memories auld,
An' sunny dreams o' Westerfauld—

Auld Westerfauld, where Uncle Wattie,
The Laird, beside the luim-cheek sat aye,
An' tell'd, to a' the household roun',
The last news o' the burgh toun—

Hoo cattle shows an' markets gangit ;
An' wha was deid an' wha was hangit ;
Wha's yarn was bocht, what wab's were clickin ;
An' wha was fortune's foot-ba' kickin'.

What unco folks had got to say,
An' wha had rumbl'd down the brae ;
An' hoo, 'tween Criffel Hills an' Stirling,
The wheel o' kintra life was whirlin'.

Sic cracks as thae were nichtly tauld
In Uncle Wat's o' Westerfauld ;
W'ither idle clish-ma-clash,
Wad only gie the reader fash.

Blythe Westerfauld in thir auld days,
Stood gey faur up the Cathkin Braes :
A farm-steid fu' o' kintra stir,
Wi' acres braid o' rigg an' fur.

Snug-placed, besouth a hill-side scaur,
It safely bode the wintry war ;
An' heard unharm'd the norland breeze,
Stormin' the choral boughs o' trees.

But when sweet Spring, the year's young child,
Had leaved and daisied wood and wild,
Was never spot more fair or sweet
Flower-dappl'd by her sunlit feet.

And when the Lady Summer deign'd
To walk the furrows, golden-grained,
A million fluted stalks held up
For sunshine, each their rich grain-cup.

But when old sun-brown'd Autumn strode
Amid his gather'd sheaves, and rode
The loaded harvest wain, and flung
His richness, hearts and homes among ;

And blew his horn o'er all the lands,
While maidens, with brown arms and hands ;
White-hooded to the dimpl'd chin,
The scattered sheaflets gather'd in ;

Then might you hear the voice of song,
And careless jest, the whole day long
The labour-freighted hours beguile,
And thornless leave the crown of toil.

Thus, as each dawn, with sword of light,
Drove from the hills the dusks of night ;
The swains from such sweet sleep arose,
As only honest labour knows.

The long rich grass beneath their feet ;
The heavens above them bending sweet ;
The cattle lowing on the leas ;
The songs of birds, and streams, and trees ;

Bright dawns, fair noons, and gorgeous falls
Of eventide, by castle walls ;
Noiseless, as when o'er fields of grass,
The feet of fabled oreads pass.

Lo ! wreath'd amid ancestral trees,
Stirr'd by the immemorial breeze,
Fair Castlemilk, at hand, appears,
Ring'd with the sunsets of the years.

There, Mary, ere her fate was seal'd
On Langside's lost but gallant field,
The night before the battle, slept,
And brief faith with her Queenship kept.

But range the Cathkin's breezy breast,
And, lo ! in yellow sunshine drest,
The mazy Clyde outspread for miles,
With Glasgow's million'd stalks and tiles.

Uprear'd, upon a hill of rocks,
Behold the giant form of Knox ;
With arm extended in rebuke—
That arm 'neath which the nation shook ;

The eye that neither swerv'd nor quail'd ;
The heart with more than armour mail'd ;
The kingly soul that boldly smote
Priest-bondage to the death, God-wot !

And with the holy faith of Christ,
Kept evermore abiding tryst,
And still in solemn stone and lime,
Frowns on the city's roar of crime.

Exalt his name ! the valiant heart
Who acted still the Christian's part ;
Who oft, as in the lion's jaws,
With " dag and dagger " threatened was.

And lying at the feet of him,
The old Cathedral, grand and grim ;
Whose solemn aisles and buttress'd walls,
Eight hundred years of time enthralls.

By sculptured shaft and altar-stair,
The monks of old have worshipp'd there ;
The voice of Knox these walls have heard ;
And Cromwell there his brow has bared.

Oft with the hoarse and steely clang
Of war, these solemn aisles have rang ;
Where now the kneeling form is seen,
The spurr'd and booted step hath been.

But now, no more for crowns or creeds,
The rough old heart of Scotland bleeds ;
Her people, knitted mind to mind,
The golden chains of commerce bind.

But see, faint-imaged on the eye,
The old Cross Steeple spears the sky ;
Around its base the roar of life—
The throb and surge of business strife ;

The battle-field of trade and arts ;
The wrestling-ground of brains and hearts ;
The throng'd arena, chariot-roll'd,
Where merchant princes grapple gold.

Enter the lists ! the bare-brow'd fight
Awaits thee ; close with all thy might ;
The thrilling toil of war's wild bliss,
Claims guerdon less divine than this.

The laurell'd ease of calm retreats
May yield the soul inglorious sweets ;
But nobler beats the heart that dares
The thunder of our streets and squares.

Better the brow ensem'd with thought,
Than life's great fight of years unfought ;
Better the toil enroughened hand,
Than kid-gloved manhood, built on sand.

Glasgow ! my native city ; thou
That wear'st the sweat-drops on thy brow ;
With bare chest heaving like the sea,
How shall I speak or sing of thee ?

Thou giant athlete of the west,
Whose lungs of fire find never rest ;
Where Labour, in the lanes and streets,
The roar of daily toil repeats,

And in the mighty yards and docks,
Makes prayer to heaven with hammer strokes ;
And rears fair palaces of stone,
For other children than his own.

Listen ! the travail takes thine ear,
In solemn fancy ye may hear
The stones and riven air repeat,
The million'd throb of hearts and feet.

And, lo ! by night, as in a dream
Of ruined suns, the lighted gleam
And flare of furnace-fires makes red
The dusky stretch of clouds o'erhead.

A hundred mouths of chequer'd light,
Flouting the starry front of night,
And hustling all the dreamy skies
With labour's smoke-blurr'd panoplies.

But when the dawn, with wheels of light,
Hath ridden down the ruined night ;
Ascend the Cathkin's brow, and greet
The city moaning at your feet.

Or, northwards, stretch the eye to where
The hills of Lennox, broad and bare,
Their brows by lightnings rent and riven,
Uplift their regal heads to heaven.

Thence, like a seer, Benledi shrouds
His head among the riven clouds,
With other vassal hills, that bare
Their foreheads to the eagles' stare.

O'er chequered lands of holm and grange,
Eastward, for miles the eye may range
To where, against the dappl'd skies,
The spires and towers of Bothwell rise.

Those giant towers, that still sublime,
Resist the crumbling touch of time ;
O'er-ivied with the sombre haze,
And fair romance of other days.

Within whose court-yards, frequent-gleam'd
The helms of warriors, foray-seam'd ;
As home-rein'd steeds were proudly spurred
Across the drawbridge, battle-blurr'd.

And far beyond, the Pentlands drear
Their giant length of hills uprear,
With Arthur's Seat, whose rounded rim
The distance dareth, dusk and dim.

But, saftly, Muse! the flicht divine
Is no for hamely wings like thine ;
Howe'er the great their lyres may twang,
Keep thou the canny side o' sang.

Now to my theme! November's blast
The drumlie skies had wide o'erblast ;
The ploughman an' his usefu' graith,
For days were oot o' harness baith.

The win's were ravin' owre the braes,
As whiles they rave in wintry days ;
An' theekit stacks, the bangster blast
Had shaken as 'twad them owre-cast.

A chill lay on the wetted yird,
An', on the vacant moorlands heard,
The curlews melancholy cry
Made lonelier the lonely sky.

But mirker clouds had dimmed the eyes,
An', lonlier than the lonely skies,
The hearth and hearts of Westerfauld,
By sorrow's clammy touch made cauld.

Death had at last his claim insisted :
Auld Uncle Wat was deid an' kisted ;
Than wham, few bodies deid or leevin',
Had better richt to arle heaven.

Auld Uncle W.at, the kindly laird,
Death nicht hae ta'en a thocht an' spared ;
His ranks were surely scant o' worth,
When he harl'd Wattie yont the yirth.

Blythe, honest-hearted Uncle Wattie,
The chair's noo empty where he sat aye ;
An' wantin' him warl's win's blaw cauld,
Across the hearth o' Westerfauld.

The head, white wi' the snaws o' time,
The heart, as warm an' rich as rhyme ;
The furrow'd face, redeemed by smiles ;
The genial crack, that ran for miles ;

The rustic laugh, that rose in flood,
And storm'd the heart wi' joyous blood ;
The plaided hap o' auld war'l ways,
The rich crack o' the langsyne days ;

These a' were his, the genial laird,
An' mony a dull hour he repair'd,
The wecht o' years his steps nicht bend—
His heart was sunshine to the end.

Thus, on the day the laird was kisted,
A wheen o' his jamb freens insisted
That they'd come stappin' yon't that nicht,
An' haud the crack till mornin' licht.

Amang them, wast came Pate Powsowdie,
The deil for drams an' coggit crowdie ;
The dominie, a Latin dabster ;
An' Wattie Withershins, the wabster.

Auld blacksmith Rab, the jee-e'd blinker—
A drooth, but something o' a thinker—
An' cockie-leekie, Tailor Charlie,
Cam' cleekin' uphill, bricht an early.

An' last o' a', ben'-leather Tammie,
Wha jinkit aff an' on the dram, aye ;
A wee carfuffle o' a bodie,
Wha kept the late laird leather-shod, aye.

To haud the guidwife's heartie up,
An' taste the lykewake bite and sup
The sax sat down ere yet the laird
Was happit in the auld kirkyard.

The guidwife, she the dram brang ben,
Some ait cakes an' an auld cheese en';
Syne, being geyan sair bestead,
She, sabbin', crap awa to bed.

The laird, ye'll mind, had twice been deid,
An' twice had waukened oot the weed;
Death-dwams, he had a wizard airt in,
But *this* time he was nail'd for certain.

The blinds were drawn, baith wast an' east,
The plate o' saut laid on his briest;
An' cannilie, for fear o' scares,
The cat was lickit up the stairs.

The lookin'-gless was cover'd ower,
Lest they micht catch an eerie glower
O' some strange face reflected there,
Wad gi'e their hameart hearts a scare.

The aucht-day clock, the auld guidwife
Had gotten frae her folks in Fife—
Whilk a' their ups an' douns had shared,
Since she first buckled wi' the laird—

This nicht stood silent ben the spence,
An' mark't what time the laird gaed hence—
Jist on the eerie edge o' twa,
The laird had quately crapt awa'.

The corpse was lying but the hoose,
The door o' whilk was standin' loose;
An' aye they gied the tither glower,
An' drew their chairs a weeock ower,

An' spak' o' deaths that late had been,
An' some wad maybe hap, bedeen;
We a' had e'en to die, 'twas true,
But death was thrang enough, the noo.

Sae jist to gie their hearts a lift,
An' haud their loupin' nerves in tift,
They cannilie put owre a dram,
An' tied the crack on Leather Tam.

The reestit cobbler thocht a wee,
A sairie lookin' face had he ;
"This nicht," quo' he, "o' weet an' win',
Sic like I ance was wander'd in.

Sae, bide ye, while I stievely tell
The mishap me that nicht befel ;
The story, an' ye'll tak my aith,
Tho' strange, is jist as true as death."

THE COBBLER'S TALE ;

OR, THE FOURTEEN FINGERS O' THE DEIL.

October's wat an' windy days
Were whusslin owre the howms an' braes,
When ae nicht, as the month grew late,
An' burns an' sheughs were a' in spate ;
The gowlin' storm, as in 'twad come,
Cam hoasting doun Kate Hyslop's lum,
As I, that nicht, wi twa-three mair,
Were haudin' a mirth-makin' there,
An' sic an awfu' nicht o' win',
Time seldom scores his note-book in.

The fun gaed on till *ane*, then *twa*,
The clock had sworn clean awa',
When, thinkin' it was time to gang,
My plaid I owre my shouthers flang,
An' grup't my stick ; then, smooth or rough,
I didna mind the road a snuff ;

If ghaists or warlocks meddled me,
My stick wad, maybe, help a wee ;
The deil nicht sook his muckle thoomb,
I wadna gie him roadside room.

The nicht was dark ; nor mune nor star
Blink't on the eesicht, near or far.
I wasna hauf road up the braes,
When, hech, my heid was in a craze.
The road was lost, an' where to turn
I kenn'd na, neither bush nor burn.
Thocht I, as sures twa three's mak six,
I'm neck-deep in an ugly fix,
Twa mile, an' mair, to grope the road yet,
An' no a blink o' dawn abroad yet.

When, wow, I e'ed a bonnie licht,
Loup, loupin', thro' the darksome nicht ;
Thocht I, that's some ane on the road,
An' on the nicht-airs loud hallo'd ;
But as the eerie licht I near'd,
It aye play'd dook, an' disappeared.
Quo' I, " An' ye be elfin licht,
I'll bauldly gie ye chase this nicht ;
For water-wraith or fabled spunkie,
When primed, I carena by, a drunkie."

Sae, on it gaed, an' I spank'd after,
When, clap ! a peal o' eldritch laughter
The nicht-win's back upon me threw,
An' gar'd my vera shank-banes grue ;
An' the next moment, heels owre heid,
Lord ! I was lying a' ways glee'd.
But when I gathered up mysel',
An' fand my heid as soun's a bell,
Quo' I, " An' ye be deil or ghaist,
Fair play ! a fae sood aye be faced.

Unfauld thysel ! frae bush or scaur
Stap oot, an' gie me cross-stick war."

I scarce had thus my challenge gied,
When, swith, a bush flew owre my heid ;
A boortree bush, wi' roots entire,
An' lowin' like a heuch o' fire,
Thinks I, noo, feelin' geyan queer,
An' wha flung that, I needna speir ;
Auld Nick ! or may my tongue be harl'd !
Auld Nick it was, as sure's the warld !
Hard on my lee-staps he's been coastin',
I hear him hint the hedges hoastin';
An' sic a croighle o' a spit—
His death, we'se live to hear o't yet.

That I felt kind o' hauf-ways queer,
An geyan *wee*, ye needna spier ;
But when I gat my breath, then—twang
My swirlin' stick I frae me flang,
An' aimed it at his auld beld pow.
But, saut the deil's tail an ye dow !
The stick he grup't while birlin' past,
An' backlins flang it fierce an' fast,
Whilk, lichtin' warmly on my lug,
Gied me a deevil o' a shug ;
An' gar'd me claw, as gleg's a buckie,
My chafts that erewhile werena yuckie.

Bumbaz'd, an' mair than sober'd, quick
I pickit up my stowfie stick,
An' seeven black finger marks were on't,
Baith geyan deeply singe't an' brunt—
The whilk, I can attest on aith,
The number *seven*, an' brunt stick, baith ;
Whereby the deil, ye'll understan',
Has gat seven finger on ilk han',

Whilk, aye, in life's uncertain game,
Gies him the odds to carry hame.
Haith ! wha wi' him wad dambrod play,
Had better lang defer the day.

"Hech, man !" quo' Blacksmith Rab ; " my certie,
That nicht ye'd been uncommon heartie ;
A wee thing breeds a wondrous trouble,
When folks are gien to seein' double."

Said Tailor Charlie, frae the nook,
"That nicht Tam jist the *truth* mistook."
"Come, noo," cried Tammie, "that'll dae ;
Nae mair o't, lang Jaik-jag-the-flae."

Said Wabster Wat, the clash to settle,
"That nicht the threed in Tammie's shuttle
Gaed raivelling aff the pirn, my sang !
An' Tam wad *wab* it, richt or wrang."

Quo' Sowdie Pate, "An' ye agree,
We'se hear the Dominie a wee."
The man o' lear his lang heid shook,
An' look'd as solemn as a book.

Quo' he, "An' ye'll no think it wrang,
I'll read ye owre a sairie sang ;
My tale sall be, an' ye maun hae't,
The flittin' o' auld aunty Kate."

THE DOMINIE'S STORY ;

OR, THE FLITTIN' O' AULD AUNTY GARTLEY.

Auld Aunty Gartley, rest her banes !
The nicht she slipp't awa',

Was chair'd beside oor auld lum-cheek—
A wreath o' winter snaw ;
The Book o' God lay on her knee,
An' frae the haly Psalms,
She waled a canny verse or twa,
To soothe her moral qualms ;
It wisna that she feared the blow,
For in her young days twice't
She'd been at death's untimely door,
But lippen'd aye to Christ.
“An' noo, guid freens, I howp an' trust
I binna be to blame,
But, an' it please the Lord,” quo' she,
“I'm wearying for hame.”

When just as she had spak the words,
Oot on the laigh door-stap
An oorie fit was heard to fa' ;
An, syne, a solemn chap.
Owre to the auld door-cheek I gaed ;
But when the sneck I drew,
A flowff o' wander'd win' cam in,
An' wail'd the hail hoose through,
An' sowff'd roun' aunty's pillow'd heid,
Syne rumbl'd up the lum.
Quo' she, “That weird win' warns me
My time is near-han' come ;
Yon candle lowe is film'd wi' death,
An' burns a dredgie flame ;
But, an' it please the Lord, this nicht,
I'd flit, an' e'en gang hame.”

Then a' the mair to comfort her,
An' stey her heartie up,
We waled some verse that airted her
To haud the blessed grup.

When a' at ance the gusty cock,
Oot in the auld kailyard,
Ere yet the dawn had touch'd the hills,
Untimeously was heard.
"Ay, ay," quo' Aunty, "deed I'll come ;
Noo, streik me in my bed,
The waukit cord o' life wears thin,
The riddle's near-han' read,
For when the cock, at twal' o' nicht,
Erects its scarlet kame,
Tak' ye nae fear, there's some lane soul,
Gaun to it's lang, lang hame.

Then read me yet anither verse,
An' snuff the crusie licht,
The death-yirm gathers in my throat,
An' bleerit grows my sicht ;"
An' as the chap o' twal was heard,
Quo she, "It's maybe wrang,
But I weary for his coming,
An' his coming's lang, lang."
When, sudden, on oor hearts an' ears,
A noise amang the delf
Gard ilk ane cast a speerin' e'e,
Up to the binmost shelf.
An' when we turned aboot ance mair,
To catch her pairtin' sigh,
Thé licht o' heaven lay on her face—
The Lord himsel' stood bye !

When thus the Dominie, doun-sittin',
Had read them Aunty Gartley's flittin' ;
Quo' he, "An' 'twill be lang, I howp,
Ere death gies us the backward cowp.

But ere the deidly bow be bent,
May we o' haly things tak' tent ;

An' cannilie endorse the name
O' Him what flitted Aunty hame."

Auld Wat, the Wabster, thocht a wee,
An' drew his sleeve across his e'e;
Said he, "I'll shelf that bonnie sang
The ben thochts o' my heart amang.

But bide ye, an' I here relate,
The wa'gaun o' my *ain* wee Kate;
Whase cheeks were rosed wi' simmers seven,
When she was stown to han'sel heaven."

THE WABSTER'S TALE;

OR, THE WA'-GAUN O' WEE KATE.

It was a sunny simmer morn,
An' oor wee Kate for 'oors
Had been awa' to Kenmuir woods,
To gather babs o' flowers.
But when the sun his golden broo,
Had dippit in the sea,
Oor lassie wander'd hame, bedeen,
An' socht her mither's knee.
"Noo, where hae ye been a' the day,
My bonnie, bonnie bairn?
Your broo is like the lowin' coal,
Your feet as blae as airn;
A waukrife licht is in your e'e.
My lassie ye're to blame;
Ye soodna roam the eerie woods,
Nor stray sae far frae hame."

The lassie she was put to bed
An' aye her raivell'd words
Were babblin' o' the streams an' flowers,
An' chirp o' bonnie birds;

An' frae her sunny lips we learn'd,
O' some sweet lady's care,
Wha laid her on the lap o' dreams,
An' kaim'd her yellow hair.
Quo' oor guidwife, wi' sairie voice,
"Guidman, I howp I'm wrang ;
But waes ! I fear oor bonnie bairn,
Will no be wi' us lang.
For do ye mind auld Granny's words ?
When bairns see orra dreams,
An' angel han' has touch'd their eyes,
An' this is what it seems."

When twa three weeks had cruppen roun',
The rose-licht left her face ;
The marvel o' her lips was gane,
But no the sinless grace.
An' aye, when dowie oot I gaed
To work the weary loom,
The shots I cuist seem raivell'd
Like the tassels o' the broom ;
Till, ae e'enin', in the gloamin',
As I wander'd dowie hame,
A sweet vision, like a sun-flaucht,
For a moment o'er me came,
An' I saw my sainted lassie
Gangin' to the land o' rest,
Wi' an angel-airm o' sunshine,
Lying roun' her neck an' breast.

Ere I had cuist my hodden coat,
Or owre the door-step gaed,
A tremblin' han', wi' waefu' fa',
Was on my shouthers laid ;
An' wi' the tears on either cheek,
Like blauds o' wintry rain,—

“Oor bairnie,” sichered oot the wife,
 “Is jist a moment gane!”
“I kenn’d it weel, guidwife,” quo’ I;
 “For as I hameward cam,
I beheld an angel lady,
 Leading hame oor dautit lamb.
An’ tho’ the wa’-gaun o’ oor bairn,
 May cost us mony a pang,
To wish her frae the airms o’ God
 Wad do the lassie wrang.”

When thus, wi’ mony a sich an’ wail,
Auld Watt had sabb’d his sairie tale;
Said Blinker Rab, “Guid freens, I troo,
We’re in the way o’ greetin’, noo.

“But wi’ your leave we’ll turn the leaf,
An’ sneck the door a wee on grief;
A tale or twa frae Tailor Charlie,
Wad spin the tap o’ humour rarely.

“Sae, lads, or ere we rise to flit,
We’s hear anither story yet;
Oor tailor freen, I’m bauld to think,
Sall haud oor hearts in tift a blink.

Lang Charlie scratched his heid a wee:
A tale was reamin’ in his e’e—
“Guid sirs,” said he, “ae windy nicht
I got an awsome kirkyard fricht.”

“Let’s hear’t, at ance,” cried Sowdie Pate;
“Let’s hear the tale—the deil be quate!
For gif it’s as I’ve heard, the win’
Will whussle eerie when it’s dune.”

THE TAILOR'S TALE ;

OR, THE KIRKYARD COLIESHANGIE.

December's mirky days were dune,
The last nicht o' the year was gangin',
As south I whussled 'neath the mune,
To see at hame the New Year brang in.

The stalks o' auld Sanct Mungo's toun,
Jist three miles in my lee were lying ;
An' I was briskly steerin' roun'
By auld Cathcart, the win's defying.

The nicht was dry, the mune was clear,
But, whew, the blast was stiffly rairin' ;
A "wee hauf" held my heart in cheer,
An' what was I for bogles cairin' ?

Sae, boxin' thro' the bangster win',
I reached at length the auld kirkyairdie,
Where mony a puir man's happit in,
An' mony a kintra-side cock-lairdie.

The mune was keekin' owre a cloud,
As she wad fain cam' doun an' greet me ;
When *something* ! hush ! as white's a shroud,
Cam' stappin' owre the dyke to meet me.

"The Guid keep me ! an' what are ye ?
An' wha can sich as you be seekin' ?"
"Come hither, freen, an' speak a wee ;
Oor auld kirkyardie tak a keek in."

"Fegs, no," quo' I, "I'm no sae daft ;
I dinna like ye kirkyard gentry ;
Ye're spun aff some uncannie waft ;
Maybe some speerit watchin' sentry.

LILTS ON THE DORIC LYRE.

"Whae'er ye be, I'm no inclined
To argie-bargie inuckle wi' ye;
I'd rather ken ye snug confined,
Where neither man nor gods wad see ye."

"Nae wraith am I," the spectre said;
"Nae wander'd ghaist, nor kirkyard sentry;
I'm what you folks ca' *deid*. My bed
Is owre amang yon gravestane gentry."

"Deid! did ye say," I cried, and lap
A foot or mair abune my standin';
"Guid help us! ye're an eerie chap,
To clap your luif a stranger's hand in.

"But, an ye're no on mischief bent,
But freenly, then the odds are little
Whether 'mang leevin' folks ye're kent,
Or cough a mouldie kirkyaird spittle."

"I'm honest, lad; nae ill's wi' me;
I'm jist a rale weel-daein' speerit;
Come owre the graveyaird wa' a wee."
"Na, na," quo' I, "I'm no deleerit.

"An', noo, guid-nicht, an' mony thanks,
For I maun yon't the gaet be spankin."
The spectre straik'd its beardless branks,
"An' hae ye, then, forgot Tam Rankin?"

"Tam Rankin! 'od, an' is it you?
Then I'se gang owre the dyke e'en wi' ye;
I'd gang barefit to Carriboo,
For sake o' aulden times to see ye."

Sae, owre the bruckit wa' we clam,
Freen Tam gaed first, an' I speil'd after;
Then, owre a moss-grown stane, ram-stam,
A wee drap made oor freenship safter.

But, when the dram had warm'd his heid,
 His mouldie shroud he frae him flang it ;
 An' " Wad I gie a moment's heed ?
 He'd sing a speerit sang, or dang it ! "

A lichtit candle in his heid,
 As in a roadman's lamp was lowin' ;
 A ghaistlier sicht I never se'ed,
 A spectral licht a deed man's pow in.

" But, an ye like, your speerit sang,
 Faith ! I'se be blythe to hear ye try it."
 'Twas best, I thocht, to keep him thrang,
 An' haud mysel' a wee thocht quiet.

The spectre straik'd his chafts a wee,
 Then *ane, twa, three*—the auld notation—
 He clam the scale wi' screwed-up e'e,
 An' yerkit oot this lood oblation :—

THE SPECTRE'S SONG.

(DEDICATED TO THE SPIRIT-HOWKERS OF
 HORNIE BRAE.)

I'm what ye ca' a speerit force,
 Wi' naething in my stummack, O !
 I ance had lands, an' kye, an' horse,
 Doun-bye in auld Carmunnock, O !
 But weary fa' the fatal day,
 That I life's tow-line slippit, O !
 I wasna yirth'd the second day,
 Till I kick'd up a rippit, O !

A flaff o' win' to fill the wame,
Your thoomb-bane thin wi' sookin' o't ;
I wonder wha could be to blame,
Gin they wad daur the brookin' o't.
Your airy, fairy forms of wax,
An' dreams o' speerit beauty, O !
When harl'd thro' the reek o' facts,
Lord knows! look geyan sootie, O !

For, be the weather dry an' fair,
Or let it rain like fountains, O !
It's aff, an' carry bags o' air,
Up spiritual mountains, O !
Sic windy wark is no for me,
Sic atmospheric capers, O !
Waist-deep in corn I'd rather be,
Amang the bearded reapers, O !

It's broadly chalkit, No. 1,
The sphere that I'm located in,
It's geyan faur below the grun',
An's tichtly barr'd an' grated in.
Yon "Trongate" chaps whyles audience beg,
An' he wha aye attends them, O !
Raps answers wi' a wooden leg,
An' *gas-oot* secrets sends them, O !

To lift a table on ane's back,
An' roun' the room gang stappin' wi't,
Wad ding a speerit's banes to wrack,
An' accidents nicht happen wi't ;
But, an' I'm able this day week,
Life's high-road I'll be on it, O !
An', maybe, at their ain door-cheek,
I'll dowff my worsted bonnet, O !

.

As thus the ghaistly sang gaed on,
Oot cam' my specks to help my seein' ;
Tam Rankin ? na, 'twas plainly shown,
The spectral rascal had been leein'.

"Guid freen'," quo' I, "I'm certain, noo,
Ye're no the rale A1 Tam Rankin !"
Puff—oot the candle licht I blew,
An' owre the dyke like stour gaed spankin'.

When, hooly, twenty ghaists an' mair,
To gi'e me chase lap oot o' hiding ;
Elastic-heel'd, an' licht as air,
They ettled for me het abiding.

But on I sped, hap-stap-an'-loup,
Along the road wi' pace tremendous ;
Frae sic anither race, I howp
The Fates will lang exemption send us.

A hundred paces in my rear,
Puff-puffin' like an' engine biler ;
A ghaistly voice faur ben my ear,
Cried, "Loup the whins, an' trip the tailor."

Thocht I, as doun the hill I tore,
"Ye thieveless, thowless pack o' ghaistlin's,
Fair play ! an' plain roads to the 'fore,
I'se try your win' a bittock eastlins'."

An', trowth, they ane by ane lost puff
Ere they the road had gone three mile o'er ;
For though the chase was het an' stiff,
They didna' that nicht catch the tailor.

The tale was owre, an' a' was laughter
Frae rantletree to 'binmost rafter ;

An' aye the joke was—"That nicht, Charlie,
The Deil's blockade ye ran it fairly."

Noo, while guid humour rins in oil,
An' seeds are cast in pleasant soil,
Anither crack we'se blythely sit,
An' daur a thimblefu' o't yet.

Ance mair, the toddy caup o' wood,
Up to the silver rim be fou'd ;
The win' may shug the doors an' tiles,
Folks need a blink o' comfort whyles.

Inside we'll mock the bangster win'.
Ootside, we'll daur him when we're dune.
Then gi'e the fire a roarin' steer,
We'se haud the winkin' dawn in cheer.

For Pleasure is a fickle jaud,
An' seldom cometh when she's ca'd ;
But since she's here we'll blythely sit,
An' weet her lips a weeock yet.

"Let Rab, the smith, e'en girr the wheel,
I'se wad he'll burn the ring on weel."
"Ay, ay," quo' Sowdie Pate, "let Rab
Gi'e Daddie Care a (hiccup) stab."

The Blinker rais'd his waukit luif,
Said he, "I ne'er was held a cuif ;
But aye, when this wae tale I tell,
My heart jows like a deidman's bell."

THE BLACKSMITH'S STORY ;

OR, THE STRANGER'S WRAITH.

The Januar' win's were blawin' snell,
The snaw lay deep on strath and fell ;

Nor bleat o' sheep, nor chirp o' bird,
Nor labours rumblin' wheels were heard,
But a' was silent, a' was still
Alike by snaw-wreathed road an' hill,
Save where the burn wi' brawlin' din,
Swirl'd, foamin' owre some spritty linn,
Or peasweeps' wae an' eerie cry,
Wide-echo'd thro' the vacant sky.

In siccan times, baith air an' late,
The thrangity wi' horse was great ;
Young naigs that wantit nail or shoe,
Or heel-an'-tae bits steel'd anew,
That they micht stievelly tak' the road,
An' walk the snaw-rinks primely shod.

Oor auld grey smiddy, weel ye ken,
Is howff'd a mile ayont the glen,
Jist where the high road tak's a turn,
An' mak's a wrinkle in the burn.
In simmer, when the braes are green,
An' fruits an' flowers are blossom'd seen,
The spot is wildly sweet; but when
The snaws up-choke baith road an' glen—
Then, when the bellows blow and roar,
And the bright glare lies on the wold,
Broad-streaming thro' the open door,
The scene is picturesque and bold,
And looks, amid the pine-trees old,
A rural picture o'er and o'er.

The gable, with the sign-board rude,
Just peeping o'er the branching thorn,
That holds the master's credit good,
When farmers drain the reaming horn—
And healths are pledged—antiquely dew'd
With rhyme-graced couplets, ancient worn.

But, saftly, lads, an' to my tale—
The day was worn doun to the nail,
An' sae was I ; for hard an' ticht
Frae screigh o' day, till aucht o' nicht
I there had stuid my waukit legs on,
An' ca'd new airns a gey wheen naigs on ;
When just as I had shed my fire,
An' hame was ettlin' to retire,
Wi' prick o' spur, an' crack o' whip,
A man on horse cam' breengin' up.
“What, ho! good friend, an' where away?
My horse, an't please ye; prithee stay ;
For, foul or fair, this night I ride
A brace of miles beyond Kilbride ;
And he who this night dares the road,
Should have his good steed primely shod.”

“Good sir,” quoth I, “the hour is late,
My fire's blown cold, but yon't the gaet
A biggish mile, or, maybe mair,
The village smith will serve ye there.”

The stranger frown'd. “Good friend,” said he,
“Thy words are but a jest, a whim ;
For if the night be late for thee,
'Tis surely also late for him.”

This said, his steed he forward guides,
An' drives the rowels in her sides,
A start, a bound, an' round the hill—
The sounds recede, then all is still.

That he nicht gang an' fecht the nicht
An' ride the roads, as best he nicht,
That was the only thocht cam o'er me,
For twa-three chaps were waitin' for me ;
An' blythely roun' the board that nicht,
I held the story passing licht ;

But an' ye'll tak my sworn aith,
I that nicht met the stranger's wraith.
A waefu' look it had, I troo,
An' bluid was lapper't on its broo ;
Where'er I gaed its waukrife e'e
Was fixed upbraidingly on me ;
An sic' a pair o' speerin' e'en,
They lookit thro' an' thro' me clean ;
Nae doot o't, I was geyan gled
To creep, that nicht, awa' to bed.

Next morn, when on the hills the dawn
The screens o' daylight had withdrawn ;
The anvil horn I rung again,
An' mingled wi' the thrang o' men ;
But ere the breakfast 'oor cam' roun'
I heard what gied my heart a stoun'
That morning, on the hills, unbound,
The stranger's reinless steed was found.
But empty was the master's seat,
The snaw had been his winding-sheet ;
An' thus, that fatefu' nicht, the wraith
Had cam' to blame me wi' his death.

When thus the Blinker's tale was owre,
The Sowdie gied a ben-ward glow'r.
"Guid help us a!" cried he, "what's that?"
An' fidgit eerie where he sat.

"I'll tak' my aith, a stap I heard,
Gang ben, an' see hoo fares the Laird."
"Hee, hee," laughed wee ben-leather Tammie,
"Gie frichtit Pate an extra drammie.

Auld Wabster Wattie scratch'd his lug ;
" Hoot, toots," said he, " it's a' humbug."
The Dominie gat oot his snuff,
An' look'd I tell ye, queer enough.

The Blinker laugh'd ; but Sowdie Pate,
His bannet gat to gang the gaet ;
Up lap the tailor wi' a bang,
Said he, " I'll mak it richt or wrang."

When jist as he had spak', Guid Lord !
By a' in sainted heaven adored—
The door gaed backwards to the wa',
An'—whew—the Laird stood 'mang them a'!

Then weird an' wild the cry was heard—
Wauk up the hoose ! the Laird ! the Laird !
Syne in their rumble-tumble wark,
Oot gaed the licht, an' a' was dark.

Wow but it was an eerie sicht
Auld Westerfauld beheld that nicht—
The late Laird or his leevin' wraith,
Playin' an awsome prank wi' death.

His een fixed wi' a ghaistly scare,
His deid-shroud whusslin' owre the flair ;
His lang white chafts, his solemn stap—
Nae ferlie that they roar'd an' lap.

Prone on his knees drap'd Sowdie Pate ;
" Lord, thou art guid an' thou art great !"
Lang Charlie he lap owre Pate's heid,
An' thro' the winnock bang'd wi' speed.

The Dominie wi' fear owrecome,
Gaed roarin' murder up the lum ;
Wow but he was a bonnie sicht,
When he crap owre the tiles that nicht.

Clean gyte wi' fricht, ben-leather Tam
The binmost shelf for safety clam.
The Wabster, wi' tremendous bang,
His bannet at the Laird's heid flang.

But Rab, the Blinker, seiz'd a gun,
An' swore he'd fire ere he wad run.
"Hoots," quo' the Laird, "as I'm a sinner,
Pit up the gun—there's naething in her.

But wha wad thocht Wat wad dune it,
To shy at me his worsted bonnet."
Wat naething spak, his e'en were baith
Wide-glowrin' like a second wraith.

Jist then, up-wauken'd wi' the scare,
Hap cam' the auld wife doun the stair;
But when the wraith-like Laird she saw,
She screigh'd, an' fentit clean awa'.

Doun frae the rafters loupit Tam,
"Poor oot," said he, "the Laird a dram ;
His deid-claes winna daunt me,
I kenn'd it frae the first 'twas he.

Up gat the gudewife frae her fent
An' when the happy truth she kent ;
Quo' she, wi' mischief in her e'e,
"Fegs, wanters noo maun wait a wee.

"That's three times, Laird, ye've jink't the Deil,
Gane *deid*, an' wauken'd perfeck weel ;
But, guidman, in your next death-weed,
Cry hooly an' ye're fairly deed."

Mute in the ben-nook Sowdie Pate
Sat laigh, an' chew'd the cud o' fate ;
Twas said the prayer he made that nicht,
Had less devotion in't than fricht.

Belyve the lang-legged Tailor chap
Cam' canny back to learn the hap ;
But no the Dominie. My fegs !
Straucht hamewards he made soople legs.

But when his wifie ope'd the door,
She e'ed him wi' a red-wud roar ;
His black chafts gied her sic a fricht,
She barr'd him oot till mornin' licht.

The man o' letters scratch'd his pow,
Quo he, " I'm in a sair fix now ;
But I'll be waefu' wat an' could
Ere I gang back to Westerfauld."

In's chair the Laird they happit up,
An' stey'd his wame wi' bite and sup ;
An' aye the joke was—" Laird, come tell,
What gar'd ye thus come to yersel ?"

The Laird bethocht himsel a wee,
Then wi' a blythesome face said he
(Between words winkin' owre to Tam),
" Indeed, 'twas jist the fragrant dram !"

Then blessings on the hearty maut,
Or by whatever name it's ca't,
That fills us fou o' pith an' pang,
An' mak's us richt when mountains wrang.

But wad ye taste it clear o' skaith,
Gae strain it thro' a tartan claith,
An' flavour't wi' a thistle-tap,
Then lug it in a three-girr'd caup.

For that's the way oor faithers did,
An' they were men o' valiant bluid ;
An' pinn'd oor thistle-flower o' worth,
A mile abune the best on earth.

And lang, lang may it flourish there,
Wild-waving in its native air ;
And gem oor hills, whose foreheads broad
Look up to liberty and God.



Candlemas Chimes and Rent-day Rhymes.

Since inditing the following poems—one or two of which have already obtained publicity in the columns of that widely-circulated and thoroughly popular newspaper, the *Glasgow Weekly Mail*,—I have been favoured with several communications from the female secretary of a powerful and influential Institution, calling itself, “The Protective Society of the Associated Auld Wives o’ the Wast o’ Scotland,” who officially declares, that, unless I am careful of my humour in future, the said Society shall infallibly exert themselves to have a bill of libel filed against me in the Camlachie Court of Session, JERUSALEM ! The sight of a bankrupt poet in the witness-box would be, I daresay, a sight only less melancholy than that of a City Provost. Therefore, be it known to the “Associated Auld Wives o’ the Wast o’ Scotland,” that I bear them no malice whatever ; that, on the contrary, to travesty the line of a popular old ditty—

“An auld Scotch wife is my delight ;”

that their couthie presence is everywhere desirable, the sight of their weel-piped mutches full of refreshing reminiscences, their snuff positively excellent, and their “crack” a perfect mental and moral intoxication. Furthermore, in the unlikely event of a foreign foe ever touching our shores, the inspiring spectacle of an auld Scotch wife, wi’ a thistle patriotically stuck in her mutch, and energetically whistling “Hey, Tuttie, Tuttie,” would force me to take up the noble refrain of Burns’ popular War-song—

“Forward ! let us do or die.”

In solemn attestation of all which, witness my signature—

ALEX. G. MURDOCH.

His X mark.

THE FLITTIN' DAY.

*A versified recapitulation of what auld Mrs
Tak'-note-o'-ither-folks'-affairs saw through her best
flint specks on that eventfu' morning.*

O leeze me on the flittin' day—
The briskest o' the year,
The rumble-tumble flittin' day,
It's aye a day o' steer;
It's then we see oor neebor folks
Turn oot their whirliwha's,
Their auld nick-nacks, their odds-an'-ends,
Their clocks against the wa's;
Their jugs withoot the handles,
And their stools withoot the legs;
Their orra duds wi' patches rife,
Their Sunday braws—my fegs!

Said Mrs—What-d'ye-Call her noo?—
Her name's aboon, I think,
As, risin' frae her bed, she socht
The winnock in a blink,
And wrappin' flannel roun' her heid,
She cleaned her newest specks,
Then settled doon to ettle notes
O' ither folks' effectks;
Nae scrimpit paragraphic scraps—
But *editorial* lang,
She streecht'd the stumpie portraits oot,
Her tongue wag-waggin' thrang.
An' aye as some new bit o' dress
Or furniture she saw,
She stievly crack'd her thoombs an' cried,
“Ma patience, that beats a'!”

She wasna gien to scandalise ;
She aye was douce an' quate ;
But here's a sample o' her tongue ;—
Note this—she never flate !

There's Mrs Hardnieves wi' her trash—
The pawnshop kens them a'—
The fechtin' fricht o' the hail close—
'Od she'll be weel awa' !—
A table an' a chair or twa ;
A hat the croon dang in ;
An' auld chaff-bed, an' twa-three duds—
That's the deserts o' sin.
Hoo a wee cuddie an' a cart
Can keep a drucken wife,
An' feed her weans—I canna see't,
No for my born life ;
I like a wee drap drink mysel',
It mak's us cracky free ;
But fegs ! I wadna gang sae far
As some I daily see.
I've aince or twice gaen ower the score,
Nae doot, that's perfeck true,
But aince or twice is something less
Than everlastin' fou'.

Hech me ! wha's yon but Mrs Smart,
Wha thinks hersel' sae braw,
Observe hoo she has spread her gear
For show alang the wa',
They're no the real mahogany—
On that I'll tak' my aith ;
What's mair, the chairs an' chest o' drawers
Are second-handed baith.
An' yon's her pictures, haud yer tongue !
The " Field o' Waterloo,"

"The Sacrifice o' Abraham,"
 An' "Burns ahint the Plough."
 Hoo she can leeve in sunshine aye,
 While ithers snoove in reek,
 An' buy sae many bonnet strings
 Aff her bit pound a-week,
 It's mair than me an' mony mae
 Can strictly weel mak' oot—
 There's something o' a mystery in't—
 That's clear, without a doot;
 An' mair than that, it seems to me,
 As plain's the letter S,
 Gin every grocer had their ain,
 She'd hae a trifle less.

Wha's this comes next—that's Mrs Pryde,
 By some, the "widow" ca'd.
 Her man's been dead these twa-three months.
 Pit aff yer weeds, ye jaud!
 For weel we ken, baith air an late,
 Ye're keekin' at the men;
 An' faith! the cock that mates wi' ye
 'Ill scratch a toozie hen.
 Ye needna spread yer gangrels oot
 To tak' some hameless e'e;
 It's no a grate an' twa-three chairs
 'Ill airt a man to ye.
 Your "grand connexions," what's their worth?
 The whussle o' a flute.
 Tak' my advice, young Mrs Pryde,
 An' rub your sign-board oot.
 Or if yer bent upon a man,
 Jist advertteeze your case;
 For auchteen-pence the newspapers
 'Ill gie yer wants a place.

Whase auld straw-bed can this be noo?
Will wonders never cease?
Can it be Mrs Clatterbags?—
The breaker o' the peace.
She wha has aye sae big a "brag,"
An' casts sae mony airs;
Whase brisk-gaun tongue is never quate
On ither folks' affairs;
Whase middlin' ways hae brocht about
Sae mony stairheid fechts,
An' gart douce neebor bodies steek
Their neeves like airn wechts.
To poke my nose intil the pat
O' ither folks kail-broo,
As she has everlastin' dune,
Is mair nor I could do.
Sma' heed I gie to ither folks—
E'en let them glunch or gloom—
Intent upon my ain affairs,
I never fash my thoom.
Though whiles, out ower the winnock sill,
I tak' a wee bit dab,
To see hoo neebor bodies fen,
But never gie't the blab.
Na, na; I aye was weel brocht up,
An' still the lesson mind;
For jist as the young twig is bent,
Sae the auld tree's inclined.
Weel, weel, she hasna much to brag,
If that's her haill turn-oot,
I've seen a bigger barrowfu'
The moon-licht road tak' foot.
An' auld book-case, a lookin'-gless,
An ancient aucht-day clock
That hasna noted time, since when?—
Since Moses struck the rock.

That jist about the feck o' a'
 That she has scrap't thegither.
 The twenty-aucht o' May's the day
 Lets neebers ken ilk ither.
 It's then we see our gangrel friens
 Turn oot their whirliwa's,
 Their auld nick-nacks, their odds and ends,
 Their clocks against the wa's ;
 Their jugs without the handles,
 An' their stools without the legs ;
 Their orra duds wi' patches rife,
 Their Sunday braws, my fegs.
 Then leeze me on the flittin' day,
 The briskest o' the year ;
 The rumble-tumble flittin' day,
 Its aye a day o' steer.

So sang oor auld note-takin' freen,
 An' cannilie withdrew
 Her heid within the winnock,
 Syne sat doon to sup her broo.
 An' the moral o' that mornin's wark,
 She aft was gien to tell,
 Gart her think less o' ither folks,
 An' much mair o' hersel'.

THE HOOSE-TAKIN' ;

OR,

*Auld Mrs. Tak'-note-o'-ither-folks'-affairs' Second
 Keek through her Best Flint Specks,*

*Related, in a Confidential Crack, to her But-an'-Ben Neebor,
 Mrs. Yuckie Lugs.*

" COME ben, auld Mrs Yuckie Lugs,
 An' share my mornin' crack,

For ae hauf-hour let hoose affairs,
 If sae be, gang to wrack ;
 For gin we wait a fitter time
 We'se maybe wait a while—
 There's naething for us women folks
 But hudgie-drudgie toil.
 'Tween makin' meals, an' washin' flairs,
 An' soopin' doon the stair,
 It's precious seldom we hae got
 An inch o' time to spare.
 Gif men folks work beyont their hours,
 The thing is deem'd a sin,
 But, air or late, wi' women folks,
 The guddle's never dune ;
 Sae, for a bittock you an' I
 Sall let the tow rin slack."
 The twa gaed linkin' but the hoose,
 And thus gaed on the crack.

MRS. TAK'-NOTE.

I've aften ferlied hoo it comes
 That neebor folks aboot
 Could pay their score, an' mak' ower't a'
 Aye sic a gran' turn-oot.
 I'm neither gien to meddlin' folks,
 Nor notin' their affairs,
 But whyles I kittle up like mad
 To see their unca airs.
 Ye'll ken auld Mrs Blaw-a-bit,
 The haverin' auld fule,
 Whase tongue about her furniture
 Rins like a flooded rill ;
 This whilesin' back I've studied her,
 An' hopefu' wrocht awa' ;
 An' cleaned my best specks twenty times
 To look her oot o' thraw,

But, na, she wadna stan' the test,
 But seem'd, aye when I cam'
 To tak' a moral keek at her,
 As gleed's a boxin' ram.
 Sae, ae nicht to mysel' says I,
 Noo, Mrs Blaw-a-bit,
 Gif rumour wags her clapper true,
 It's said ye're gaun to flit;
 An' that be sae, I'll mak' pretence,
 An' cannilie I'll gang,
 An' see the inside o' your hoose—
 In that there's little wrang.
 Sae, I got on my chacket shawl,
 An' quately oot I gaed.
 No that at a' I meant to flit,
 Tho' that exkase I made,
 But jist to satisfy my mind,
 An' e'en learn for mysel'
 For what auld Mrs Blaw-a-bit
 Aye rang sae lood a bell.
 Weel, up I slippet to her door,
 An' cannilie I rapp'd,
 "I've cam' to see the hoose," quo' I,
 An' bauldly ben I stapp'd;
 "An' is the bed quite free o' damp?
 The wa's, are they quite dry?
 An' does the lum gang nice an' free?"
 Quo Blaw-a-bit, "Ou ay;"
 "An' dae ye leave here wi' a grudge?
 Or can ye faut the hoose?"
 Quo' she, "The room's ower sma' for me,
 Indeed's for little use,
 My furniture has grown sae much
 That I'll e'en need to gang
 An' arle, for comfort's sake, a big
 Twa-room hoose richt or wrang.

My chest o' drawers an' sofa baith
 Are jist rale crushed thegither,
 An' then my guid mahogany chairs
 Are elbowing ane anither ;
 My pictures, too, are hung sae thick
 That the effeck is lost,
 An' a' artistic licht an' shade."
 Quo' I, " Exkase my hoast ;
 I've got a rale bad cauld, ye see,
 An' wi't a kirkyaird spit"
 (The ne'er a spit had I ye ken,
 Nor cough nor cauld a bit.)
 But jist to hear her fulish talk,
 I couldna' weel contain,
 Sae hoastit oot my chockin' mirth,
 An' chack'd the blawflum strain.

MRS. YUCKIE LUGS.

Her furniture ! hech, sirs, the day !
 An' see her highness flit,
 We'll maybe hae an orra chance
 To corner-keek it yet.
 But, trowth, I fear the chance is sma',
 For ere that time comes roun'
 Her things will take the gaet some nicht
 Beneath a burket moon.

MRS. TAK'-NOTE.

Deed an' ye're no faur aff the mark,
 For, tackin' roun' her lee,
 Quo' I, " Noo, Mrs. Blaw-a-bit,
 Your room I'd like to see."
 " Ou ay !" quo' she, an' ben she gaed,
 But fand the door was lock'd ;
 " The sorra tak' the key," she cried,
 An' to the flytin' yoked,

"That thowless key is aye amiss,
 When folks my room wad view."
 Thinks I, 'deed, Mrs. Blaw-a-bit,
 Ye're on the richt rail noo.
 So, while she rummag'd ben the hoose,
 Thro' ilka nook an' chink,
 I looted doon, an' keekit thro'
 The key-hole in a blink,
 An' as I've got to answer for't,
 The place frae floor to roof
 Was jist, as far as I cood see,
 As bare's a beggar's loof—
 Nor chest o' drawers, nor pictur'd wa's,
 Nor e'en a wander'd chair.
 Save ae auld antiquarian bed,
 The sorra else was there!
 I ne'er gat sic a big surprise
 In a' my born days,
 I thocht I wad hae swarf'd awa'
 Wi' doonricht deid amaze.

MRS. YUCKIE LUGS.

The deil tak' pride ; that I sood ban ;
 But slippy is the grup
 When plain folks dicht their nebs an' try
 To flee like leddies, up ;
 For, sune or late, the big black han'
 O' misluck never fails
 To cast a goupinfu' o' saut
 Athwart their pridefu' tails.

MRS. TAK-NOTE.

Ay, deed, that's true, an' I cood tell
 A nebbie tale or twa
 Hoo pride will sometimes mak' a slip
 An' get an aukward fa' ;

But weel ye ken I seldom fash
 Wi' ither folks, nor gie
 The sma'est cause for neebors roun'
 To mak' remarks on me.
 Na, na, that's no the gait o' me,
 I dinna like to blaw.
 But, clear o' that, than me there's few
 Cood gie a crooser craw.
 Gif I but held wi' neebor wife
 The wee'st scandal-crack,
 My conscience for three weeks to come
 Wad jist be on the rack,
 Tho' whyleocks, I micht haud wi' you,
 A quate an' cosh bit chat,
 Or tak' a keek at what's gaun on—
 There's nae rale harm in that!
 Guid-day, then, Mrs Yuckie Lugs,
 Some ither time, ne'er fear,
 We'll sum up auld outstanding cracks,
 An' score the ledger clear.

THE RENT DAY;

OR,

Hoo Auld Mysie Oot-Generaled Her Hoose-Factor.

Auld Mysie by the ingle sat
 An' flate the fates for lang an' langer,
 There wasna muckle harm in that,
 The best o's whiles gang wud wi' anger.

The Rent day had come roun' ance mair
 An' fand her in a fix—guid wuman!
 Sae, wi' a dowf an' waefu' air
 She waited on the Factor's comin'.

Before her, snug amang the ause,
 Auld baudrons dozed wi' sleepy blinkers
 Her fore-paws laid across her nose
 Like ither philosophic thinkers.

Sae soun' her sleep, sae quate the hoose
 The mice were roun' her whiskers jinkin';
 Tho', dootless, in her dreams, oor puss
 Was hunting them ilk nook an' chink in.

Quoth Mysie, sittin' a' alane,
 "Hech! but thir times are worth the hangin',
 This day, oor gaucy Laird, its plain
 Maun jist withoot his rent be gangin'.

"I'll keep the hoose, an' steek the door
 An' move aboot wi' canny footin',
 The factor he may rap an' roar,
I'm oot, that's settled past disputin'.

When, scliff-sclaff, up the wooden stair
 The factor's foot was heard ascendin';
 His every stap twa stoun's an' mair
 Thro' Mysie's heart was extra sendin'.

Straucht up he cam', an' cannilie
 Against the door he laid his knuckles.
 Thocht Mysie, "Fegs, ye'll wait a wee
 Ere ye win in, Laird—boots an' buckles.

"When rent day comes ye're unca fain
 To look us up an' sneck the siller,
 Misluck may sen' ye win' an' rain,
 But no for that ye'll knuckle till her.

"But tell ye that frae en' to en'
 The hoose, for certain, needs repairin',
 As lang's a bodie mak's a fen,
 The sorra ither haet ye're carin'.

“ Rap, tap, tir-rap; ay, there ye gang,
Jist chap awa’ till patience lea ye.
Fegs, dinna dae the door-boards wrang
An *absent* tenant canna see ye.

“ The deil’ tak’ ye! that I sood scauld;
You Factor-folks get business credit,
But let oor rents be three days auld
Ye’ll quately tak’ the law an’ sned it.

“ ‘Od, sic a breenge! Hech, but ye’re crazéd!
To kick up sic a clamihevit,
Tak’ care, Laird! an’ I’m richtly raiséd
I’ll treat ye to a heartie flewit.

A dish-clout laid across your lugs
Wad, maybe, teach ye better mainners,
A fig for a’ your beagle thugs
An’ tell-tale-tongued stairheid retainers.

“ As lang’s oor guidman staps the yird
An’ I oot-owre the doors can paidle
I’ll ride, wi’ heart as licht’s a bird,
Life’s spaivin’d naig, tho’ short the saidle.

“ Tho’ coals be dear, as lang’s we dow
We’ll aye fin’ some wee bink to sair us
An’ kennle up a bonnie lowe
Tho’ misluck dae her warst to skair us.

“ But wheesht! an’ I’m no wrang, I think
There’s some ane to his Lairdship speakin’
I’ll slip behint the door a blink
An’ sniff the kail-pat while it’s reekin’.

“ Mischanter lick me wi’ a rung!
As I’m this day a leevin’ sinner!
If that’s no Mrs. Nashgab’s tongue
Oot-spewin’ a’ the spite that’s in her.

“Jist hear the jaud!” “Beyond a doot,
 She’s in, o’ that I’m perfeck certain,
 Jist bide ye, Laird, an’ shame her oot,
 Rap twice ere ye think o’ depairtin’.”

The tell-tale wins that spak the clash
 As thro’ the key-hole chink it slippet,
 Gied Mysie’s temper instant flash
 An’ thereby bred an’ unca rippet.

Thocht she, “The sorra tak’ your tongue
 Auld Nashgab, an’ may I be licket
 Wi’ black mischanter’s gnarled rung
 Gif your wee game, I dinna nick it.”

Sae, cannilie she forms a plot
 An’ harls the bed-claes owre the table,
 Slips off her gown, tie’s up her throat,
 An’ looks as *no-weel* as she’s able.

To ee’d her then, a bodie sure
 Wad thocht her wae an’ unca ill o’t.
 Had health had gotten sic a cloor
 She’d, maybe, never square the bill o’t.

Then quately she the door re-seeks
 To list the ill-tongued scandal jobber,
 Quo’ Nashgab, “Laird, its weeks an’ weeks
 Since she was onything like sober.”

“Jist rap her oot—she’s but the hoose,
 An’ brawlie kenn’d she o’ your comin’.”
 Roar’d Mysie, noo, wi’ tongue run loose—
 “Shut up! ye nesty, leecin’ woman.”

Then, bang! the door she open jee’d,
 While Nashgab bolted her’s like lichtnin’;
 Wi’ besom-handle hung owre’s heid,
 Wow, but she gied the Laird a frichtnin’!

“An’ you, ye bitter, spitefu’ jaud,
To set the Factor’s lugs a-bummin’;
An’ threep an ugly scandal blaud,
That I was weel, an’ kenn’d his comin’!

“To force a bodie oot o’ bed,
An’ gar me flyte when hoarse an’ roupit—
For shame, ye auld nash-gabbit gled!
Sic tongues as yours sood aye be croupit.

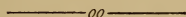
“An’ as for you, auld Laird”—but, wow,
The Laird was aff, an’ oot the entry!
Folks said he ne’er gat sic a cove
Since he had first owre rents stood sentry.

Awa’ he spank’d on soople legs,
Nor e’er frae that to this has seen her;
An’ rumour says that Mysie, fegs!
Has gotten twal’ months’ credit gie’n her.



Miscellaneous Poems,

CHIEFLY HUMOROUS.



BE AYE BRIZZING YONT.

(Being ane guid Moral Advice to all and sundrie.)

As owre the warld's whinstane roads
Life's fash you're fechtin' thro',
Ye'll likely meet wi' mony slips,
An' maybe fa's a few ;
But no for that gang heepie-creep,
But still wi' manly front
Thro' drodum-skelpin' scaur an' waur
Be aye brizzing yont.

Misfortune is a bangster chiel,
Whyles deals a heavy blow ;
He swings the hammer hard owre hip,
Faith ay ! an' what for no ?
But when the punishment is owre,
We seldom think upon't ;
Then up, an' bustlin' to the fore,
Be aye brizzing yont.

I've seen a bodie i' my time
Without a single howp,
Amang the flinty whins o' life
Laid clean upon his dowp ;
But tichtly he'd get up again,
The better for the brunt—
Gin ye wad score success in life,
Be aye brizzing yont.

When corner'd wi' a social freen
To whyle your cares awa',
Ye may, an' ye've a mind, tak' *ane*,
But never venture *twa*.
'Tis only thus that ye'll contrive
To sneck the door on want ;
Clear o' the shooglie planks o' life
Be aye brizzing yont.

As thro' the lanes o' life ye jouk
Ye'll ablins meet wi' some,
Wha owre a wee bit bother mak'
An' unca weary bum ;
But up, an' bauldly breast the tide
As is the true man's wont,
In sailor-phrase, the compass course
Be aye brizzing yont.

An' some ye'll find o' feckless stuff
Wha winna haud the grup ;
But aye when fortune kicks the trams
The kittle race gie up.
Sic prophets o' disasters snell
Are ever crying—don't ;
But snap your thoomb, an' owre the bent,
Be aye brizzing yont.

Ne'er let the contact o' the warld
Your straucht-gaun purpose mar,
But keep your conscience haill an' clean
An' grudge the wee'st scar.
The broad an' open road o' Truth,
When ance ye're fairly on't,
Across its whins wi' sicker step
Be aye brizzing yont.

E'en let mischanter geck your heels
 An' thraw your steyst step,
 The open honest heart doth aye
 Some God-sent blessings kep.
 Then, still in sunshine or in rain,
 Up owre the Pisgah mount,
 Towards the Christian hame o' hames
 Be aye brizzing yont.

THE KIRS'NEN O' THE BAIRN;

OR, SOMEBODY'S MISTAK'.

Whilst modern Bardship, wud for fame,
 Parnassus' brae up-sprachles,
 Let me still jink aboot the hearth
 On hamely kitchen bauchles.
 Some ither day, a loftier theme
 May gie my wings an airin',
 But this nicht I'll sit doun an' write
 The kirs'nen o' the bairn.

The nicht that oor wee doo cam' hame
 (Guid luck gang wi' the howdie),
 The cakes an' cheese gaed roun' like stoor,
 An' tongues went rowdy-dowdy—
 A perfeck airmfu' o' a wean!—
 The picture o' its daddie!
 An' twenty times owre to the licht,
 To roose it I was ca'd aye.

Thocht I, as ben the spence I snoov'd,
An' hirsled in a corner,
"To gie mysel' fair play, its true,
The wean's jist rale by-or'nar.
Though something late the lassie's cam',
(For we've been lang thegither)
The gossip's tongue wid rin a mile
To match me sic anither."

Thus ilka nicht—a week an' mair—
The hoose was warm an' steerin';
An' for the mither an' her bairn,
The kintra-side was speerin'.
An' sic a wean! that, jist to see't,
'Twas worth a three days' jauntie—
Though whiles I blamed the blythe-meat dram
For makin' them sae vauntie.

But when the kirs'nen day cam' roun',
Feth! I was in a swither—
Wi' cousin Geordie's best suit on,
I thocht mysel' anither.
The sleeves were jist a kennin' lang,
The tails hung kind o' throu'ther;
But—whew—the hat gaed owre my e'en,
An' rested on ilk shouter.

But swiftly twa-three *Weekly Mails*
Were faulded to the roun' o't;
An' ane by ane, wi' canny care,
Were stappit in the croun o't.
An' when put on, Lord! yes, 'twas true,
I look'd jist like the gentry.
The match o' me was seldom seen,
Benorth the hills o' Fintry.

Sae, aff we gaed, an' gleg an' fast,
The wife gied me advice aye,
To mind my han', an', ere I spak',
To chowe my thochts owre twice aye.
An' mind an' haud the bairn up weel,
An' no look dowff an' sumphie ;
But tell my crack wi' manly birr,
An' no snoove like a grumphie.

“Hech me!” sich'd I, “but this is nice,
To dree the wifie's barkin's,
An' gang before the minister,
An' thole the kirk's remarkin's.
The fash an' cares o' married life,
Had I but hauf forseen them !
But, *for mair bairns!*—may years an' years
Gang faur enough between them.”

At length, the bairn laid owre my airms,
I bauldly ben gaed stumpin' ;
But when my turn to stan' had cam',
My nerves wi' fricht were jumpin'.
But up I held the bairn, as ye'd
Haud oot a plate for awmous,
When, guidsake ! as ill-luck wid hae't,
The wean was kirs'ten'd “Tammass,”

Mischanter seize the heartless fates,
That work sic cruel capers,—
The minister or beadle John
Had somehow mixed the papers ;
Or I, pat gyte wi' nervous fear,
My turn had clean mistakit,
An' sae oor pet was misnamed “Tam,”
Whilk pat the wife distrackit.

My wordie! hoo she bann'd an' storm'd
 When we gat oot the kirkie,—
 A mile an' mair she flate me hame,
 An' left my nerves gey jerkie.
 An' e'en, when corner'd snug at hame,
 Her tongue the glegger ran aye—
 While I, to ease her wrath, play'd oot
 The tow-line nice and canny.

But aye 'twas, "Och! this sair mistak'
 Will work oor bairn mischanter;
 For, an' the auld presage gangs true,
 She'll lang lang be a wanter.
 An' she shall hae a beard before,
 The laddie bairn she's ca'd for;
 An' that, ye ken, is something mair
 Than dooce-gaun Nature baud for."

"Beard, or no beard! Amen!" I cried,
 "I carena by a spittle!"
 When, gowff, her steek'd nieve took my lug,
 An pat me on my mettle.
 Then up I bang'd, my angry wame
 Wi' perfect wrath distended;—
 The wifie quately edged awa',
 An' there the duddrie ended.

THE FU' WEE WIFIEKIE.

The first eight lines of the following verses—saving a few verbal alterations—form part of a very old fragment of Doric verse, the composition of one GEDDES, a Roman Catholic priest.

There was a wee wifiekie,
 Was coming frae the fair,
 Had got a wee bit drapikie,
 That bred her muckle care.

It took upon her hameart heart,
An' she begoud to spew ;
An' quo' the wifiekie—" My fegs !
I hope I'm no fu'."

It chanced this dooce wee wifiekie
A gangrel bodie met,
Wha e'ed her wee infirmity,
An' lean'd her owre a yett.
"Noo, what's gaen wrang, an' whaur's your hame?
Speak oot, an' tell me true."
"Deed," quo' the wifiekie, " I doot
I'm jist rale fu'."

" Doun-bye whaur Kelvin's waters meet,
An' mingle wi' the Clyde,
I laird a wee bit binkie hoose
That cocks its nose at pride.
An', gin ye tak' me there this nicht,
I'll thank ye weel, I trow,
For losh, as you may plainly see,
I'm jist blin' fu'."

" It's not that much I had, but jist
The dribs o' twa gill stoups;
The wee'st thochtie tak's my heid,
An' feckly me owre-coups.
My fegs, the times are chang'd, I ween,
An' things are lookin' *blue*,
When a bit thimblefu' o' maut
Mak's dacent folks fu'."

" I mind when I was young an' lithe,
An' stievely stapp'd the yird,
A taste o't in my aitmeal cog
Left me as blythe's a bird ;

But noo, when sorted wi' a frien',
Gif I but weet my mou'
I *ship* a sea or twa gaun hame,
An' land gey fu'.

"Oor John—or e'er the vale of death
He slippit canny ben—
Gat wond'rous gleg about the pow,
An' bragg'd the wut o' ten.
An' aye your modern dram, he said,
Gied him the grumlie goo.
He vowed 'twas no the guid auld stuff
That fill'd oor dads fu'.

"An', quately, frien', he didna speak
A mile ayont the truth,—
The *rale* stuff neither racks the heid,
Nor leaves a lowin' drooth.
'Twas best when oor auld daddies brew'd
Their ain drap maut, I troo,
An' took a sip o't, noos an' than—
But never fell fu'.

"An' noo, guid nicht, an' thank ye, frien'.
Hech ! but the win's blaw snell ;
Tho' stoorie be the roads, I think,
I'll manage hame mysel'.
An' see me landed safe an' snug,
The whins and breckans thro',
I'll neither gang sae faur frae hame,
Nor get sae (hic) fu'."

EPISTLE TO JAMES NORVAL,
A CALTON BARD.

AULD FREEN',

A twalmonth's gane and mair
Since you an' I acquainted were,
An' cantie-ways I feel whene'er
I'm corner'd wi' ye;
In trowth, I like ye mair an' mair,
The mair I see ye.

An' prood am I to tak' your part,
My daddie in the rhymin' art;
There's few, I think, wad hae the heart,
To read your lays
An' no find wells o' feelin' start
An' words o' praise.

Your "Auld Man's Sang," your "Aunty Meg,"
An' yon ane where on happer't leg
The waefu' woman comes to beg
The pickle meal,
Micht gie the stainiest hearts a fleg,
An' gar them feel.

Your weanie's *scare*, the weird "Boo-man,"
Rattlin like "chuckies in a can,"
Wee bairnies' hearties to trepann,
An' gar them sleep,
Frichts them as if a muckle han'
Was rais'd in threep.

Let thrawn misfortune kick your shins
An' puirtith hand ye thro' the wins,
Yon grand bit on the wild "March Win's,"
A noble sang,
Will some day set ye on your pins,
Or I'm faur wrang.

In purse ye dinna much excel ;
 I'm no a millionaire mysel' ;
 It's seldom poets' pouches tell
 The money jingle,
 But lang, as now, may comfort dwell
 At your blythe ingle.

For me, my Muse, baith late an' air,
 To head the brae is croighlin sair,
 Tho' whiles, when wrapt in visions rare,
 In some lone glen,
 She tak's a higher flicht in air
 Than some we ken.

But ere the days grow lang an' licht,
 Faith ! I'se be doun some antrin nicht
 To gie your furthy heart a hecht
 An' share your crack,
 And daddie Care will get a fricht
 Ere I gae back.

The poets in oor crack will blend,
 We'll read the happy lays they've penn'd—
 The " Rambler " Hugh, wha ca'd you " friend,"
 Sweet be his rest !
 Rodgers an' Miller—them ye kenn'd—
 An' a' the rest.

But lest the tow-line sood rin' slack,
 May I see there Laird Bob*—stan' back !
 I houp his *Lairdship* winna brack
 Auld freenship's kin,
 But still may he unfauld his crack
 As lang he's dune.

* A facetious and valued friend of the author.

Therefore, when next the Laird ye see,
Tell him, when in the touzie key,
A nicht wi' him I wadna gie
For much, an' mair;
His graphic crack, Lord, aye tak's me
Miles thro' the Fair.

Tell him I wait wi' poother'd wiggie
The promised hurl in his giggie,
Some bonnie morn by Bothwell Briggie
We'se tak' the road,
An' if we dinna rin the riggie,
'Twill e'en be odd.

Noo, I maun dicht my sparkin' pen,
And bring this rhyme-shot to an en';
Some nicht, bedeen, I'll mak' a fen'
To come an' see ye.
Meantime, in freenlie phrase, till then,
The Gude be wi' ye!

WEE TODDLIN' BREEKUMS.

(A FOND MITHER'S HEART-SANG.)

Wee toddlin' breekums
Waddles but an' ben,
A big man in his ain wee thochts,
Like ither aulder men.
When stumpin', stacher roun' the hoose,
Or ramplin' on my knee,
I aften wonder what on earth
The bairn 'ill grow to be.

Wee toddlin' breekums,
Your daddie—noo awa'—
Declar'd ye'd be a Provost yet,
Wi' back as braid as twa.
The noble bump o' bailieship,
That's only gien to few,
He ae nicht teuchly graipit for't,
An' fand it big in you.

Wee toddlin' breekums,
When ye're laid owre in sleep,
What anxious thochts o' ill to come
A mither's heart will keep.
I see ye in the future years,
In spite o' warning words,
Up on the binmost cellar-taps
Thrang settin' traps for birds.

Twa bricks laid langways on the roof,
An' ane across ilk end,
A slate up-hauden by a twig,
Where birds micht licht an' fend;
A seat ahint some auld lum-tile,
Belyve, a merry roar,
Wee toddlin' breekums
Ye've much to answer for.

Or up an' down the sunny streets
I see thee rin for 'oors,
Thrang followin' the water-cairts
That lay the simmer stoors,
Wi' breeks up-buckled owre the knees,
Stump, stumpin' through the weet,
Wee toddlin' breekums
Richt blythe will gang your feet.

But there's ae picture whiles comes up
That gars my bosom thrill—
I watch thee, wi' new washen face,
Gaun to the Sabbath schule.
Life has twa plainly cawkit paths—
Ane narrow an' ane broad;
But wee toddlin' breekums
Tak' ye the jimpest road.

Wee toddlin' breekums,
Your mither's heart is fain
To clesp ye thus within her airms,
An ca' ye a' her ain.
The horny grip o' hardship's han'
Will never daunt me—
Wee toddlin' breekums
Ye're mair than gold to me.

Wee toddlin' breekums,
The years that bring to thee
The glory o' thy manhood's prime
Shall lay the tawse on me.
But when auld mither's stap, in turn,
Is wearin' short an' frail,
My toddlin' breekums, grown a man,
Sall cleek me doun the vale.

MY FIRST NEW HAT.

There's ae wee blink o' sunny mirth
Whiles floods this heart o' mine—
The memory o' my first new hat,
Whilk cost me sax-an'-nine;

Weel brush'd an' glossy, sleek and black,
As ony young tab cat,
Oh! prood was I to think't my ain,
My first new hat.

That very nicht I brocht it hame,
I dress'd in sprucest fig ;
I held mysel' as braw's the best,
An' thocht me byous big ;
Syne doon to her wha own'd my heart,
I took a hurried spat,
An', wow, but she was gleg to note
My braw new hat.

She gat her braws, an' aff we sped
To view the steerin' toun ;
My heart tick'd bricht an' happy 'neath
The glory o' my croon ;
Nor sicht nor soun' I saw or heard
But borrow'd grace frae that ;
A radiant licht it cuist owre a',
My brent new hat.

Oor Tib, tho' noo she's auld an' frail,
An' ye'll her ain word tak',
Was ance as braw an' trig a lass
As e'er man's heart-strings brak' ;
But ne'er saw I her couthie face
Look snugger or mair pat,
Than then it did that nicht I wore
My guid new hat.

An' when the Sabbath day cam' roun'.
Aff to the kirk I spank'd ;
I aye had notions after guid,
For whilk the Lord be thank'd.

But wasted were the twa guid hours,
That there I dreamin' sat ;
It bang'd the sermon a' to bits,
My bricht new hat.

It's years an' years sin' syne, an' still
At hame, or yon't the sea,
Where'er I've been, my first new hat
A moral spak' to me.
An' aft at what I hear and see
I smile, for weel I wat
There's mair than me gang gyted ower
Their first new hat.

THE WEE DRAP O' DRINK.

O' a' the sorrows and the sins
That mak' the fash o' life,
The want o' cash—the loss o' freens—
The tongues unruly strife—
The moral slips an' fa's we mak'—
The plunges ower the brink,
There's nocht can haud the candle tae
The wee drap o' drink.

I've read in children's buiks, lang syne,
O' giants great and big,
Wha slew the simple kintra folks,
An' ran a bluidy rig ;
But a' that fell Romance has penn'd,
Will hardly match, I think,
The pranks o' that immortal deil,
The wee drap o' drink.

Wi' auld an' young, wi' rich and puir,
He sits an' cracks richt free,
Till heart an' soul are daizzled wi'
The licht that's in his e'e.
It's no an open door he needs ;
Gie him the sma'est chink
To keek within, an' wha'll keep oot
The wee drap o' drink.

When Peace an' Love thegither meet,
He thrusts himsel' between—
There's no a corner o' the earth
Escapes his speerin' e'en ;
In braid daylight, in mirk midnight,
He gars the glasses clink,
Till, moth-like, hundreds bizz aroun'
The wee drap o' drink.

I sometimes read the papers thro',
When ance my days' toil's dune,
An' aye there's ae black chapter there,
That croons the lists o' sin.
The broken heids, and broken hearts,
Recorded there, I think,
Rin up an unca bill against
The wee drap o' drink.

When fuddlin' Saturday comès roun',
That brings the week's bawbees,
The great enchanter waukens up,
An' cracks his biggest lees,
Till a' the tender thochts o' hame
Beneath his glamour sink—
It blunts the heart, it blin's the sight,
The wee drap o' drink.

Aroun' the board, O! hear them sing,—
It pangs us fou o' fun,
It oils the rusty wheels o' life,
An' gars them sweetly run;
The fashes an' the plagues we bear,
It scatters in a blink!
There's nae enchantment hauf can match
The wee drap o' drink.

O! bricht an' brilliant are the wiles,
That play beneath his broo;
An' merry is the wond'rous sang
He sings the lang nicht thro'!
Till full the startled moon keeks in
Upon the jovial rink;
But wha for that wad rise an' leave
The wee drap o' drink?

Let science dust her learned wig
Wi' formal hems an' haws,
An' lecture erring heids an' hearts
On Nature's outraged laws;
The *Faculty* an' *Clergy* baith
Indulge a neutral wink.
So fill your glass an' hand it roun',
The wee drap o' drink.

Ay, hand it roun', an' think na o't—
The mornin's rackin' heid,
The tuggin' teeth o' fell remorse,
That mak' the vitals bleed!
Ay, hand it roun', but tent ye, lads,
When ye begin to wink,
Tak' care it doesna trip ye up,
The wee drap o' drink.

A thousan' years ago, or mair,
 Beneath the Grecian vine,
 Anacreon snugly sat an' sung,
 An' sipp'd the bluid-red wine,
 Till he an' his besotted muse
 Fell ae day owre the brink!
 The flow'r o' genius pales beneath
 The wee drap o' drink.

But somehow, be it sune or late,
 The world will learn, I houp,
 That nocht but sorrow e'er cam' oot
 The publican's gill-stoup;
 An' they wha bauldest spak its praise,
 Will then confess, I think,
 The world wad better be withoot
 Its wee drap o' drink.

EPISTLE TO JOHN YOUNG,

Author of "Hamely Pictures in Verse," etc.

Dear brither bard, your silence lang,
 Has gien my heartie mony a stang—
 Thinks I, there's surely something wrang,
 Wi' Johnnie's muse,
 Or else we'd hae a hearty sang
 Whiles in the "*News*." *

Sae I was mair than or'nar glad,
 To read yon hamely, jinglin' blaud,
 On "*Bairnie Nell*"—I think it's ca'd—
 A heartsome strain;
 Lang may her mither an' her dad
 Craw owre their wean.

* The *Christian News* newspaper, whose columns Mr Young's contributions in verse occasionally enriched.

I'm no much gien to soundin' praise,
 But haith ! I wad be in a craze,
 Gif I could read your cheery lays
 Devoid o' pleasure;
 Sic native blinks o' genius' rays
 Are aye a treasure.

Of a' oor local singing train,
 Beside your gifted sel', there's nane
 Can sing a hamely fireside strain,
 Wi' sweeter birr,
 Your verse croons owre the auld hearth-stane,
 Like Pussey's purr.

It's no the glitter an' the glare,
 O' Latin words an' heathen lair,
 That tak's a chiel's admirin' stare,
 But jist a touch
 O' Nature's colour, here an' there,
 That pleaseth much.

An' tent me, douce and honest Johnny,
 My guid, leal-hearted, rhyming' cronic,
 Ye sing as sweet a lilt as ony—
 Sae rhyme it thrang,
 An' scatter wide your sang-buds bonnie,
 Wi' heartie pang.

As for mysel', I'm no owermuch
 Disturb'd wi' the poetic itch;
 I gied my Muse an extra stretch,
 Ae luckless morn,
 An' aye sin' syne the fickle witch,
 Has me foresworn.

But that, as sma'est loss I tak' it,
The jaud, at best, was gey boobackit;
An', worse than that, her head was crackit
 An' gien to nod;
Her freenship, since she choose to brak it,
 May tak' the road.

Like road-stoor, here and thither wafted,
Owre fancy's sea I lang hae drifted,
Whiles quite cast down an' whyles uplifted;
 But blaw the whistle!—
I carena hoo the scenes are shifted,
 Ae single thrissel.

Let ithers clim' the braes o' fame
Wi' eager step an' soul aflame.
An' win a title an' a name—
 They're welcome to it;
I'll chowe contentment's cud at hame,
 An' never rue it.

The sea, the sky, the hills be mine,
Wi' soughin' woods an' flower-beds fine,
Whaur trottin' burnies twist an' twine,
 Wi' singin' swirl;
It's there true feeling and divine
 The bluid does dirl.

Oor dear auld mither Nature's face,
Whaur licht an' shade ilk ither chase,
Has aye a timely shower o' grace
 For vacant hearts;
The cheery hope—the smile of peace
 She aye imparts.

Sae, when owre fiel' and hillside green,
The April hares are whiddin' seen,
We'll tak' a jaunt my rhymin' frien'
 Some bonnie day,
An' gather precious gear, I ween,
 For mony a lay.

Meantime, on bended knees I beg
A blessing baith for you and Meg;
Lang may ye dowfly shake your leg,
 Wi hearty fling,
Still croodlin' snugly—croose an' clegg—
 'Neath fortune's wing.

BLYTHER JOHNNY MAUT.

(A Saturday Afternoon Photograph.)

As I gaed trudgin' hame ae nicht,
Wi' twa pounds in my pocket—
That I had gotten for my wark,
Tho' sair for't I'd been troket;
Jist richt fornenst a Public-hoose
Blythe Johnny Maut he met me,
An' wi' a warm wink o' the e'e
Before the board he set me.

Noo Johnny Maut, the folks declare,
Is jist a rale guid fellow;
His hearty crack is bauld and bricht,
His soul baith rich an' mellow.
It's said he carries in his pouch
A box o' saw for a' sairs;
An' they wha wi' him sort declare
He laughs an' winks awa' cares.

But Conscience ever nips my lugs,
An' swears his crack's no canny ;
But Conscience whiles, the maist o's ken,
Tells tales as auld's my granny.
An' if we snoov'd to Conscience aye,
We'd never but be prayin'—
E'en kirk-gaun folks themsel's at times
The wrang road whiles will stray in.

Sae I bauld Conscience tak' the door,
An' leave me to my fancy ;
But Conscience still cheep'd in my lug—
"John Maut's a chiel unchancy."
"Aweel," quo' I, "sae let it be,
But be na rash to blame him ;
There's some teetotal folks, ye ken,
That oot o' place misname him."

Sae I gied Johnny Maut the wink,
An' doun we sat thegither.
Quo I, "Noo, Johnny hoo to act
I'm in a deid-sweer swither ;
For some there are that sair misca',
Whilst ithers hecht an' roose ye ;
I'm half-ways gi'en to tak' your part,
An' half-ways to abuse ye.

"Fu' mony a plack I've spent on drink,
An' mony a fa' ye've gien me ;
At a' 'oors airm-in-airm wi' you
Dooce, dacent folks hae seen me.
An' weel ye ken that's no the gaet
Us Christian folks sood travel—
A nicht wi' you whiles ties a knot
The de'il could scarce unravel."

"Tuts, man," quo' Johnny, "sneck your dram,
An' cease your clish-ma-clavers ;
Your crack, I'll label 't—*This side up ;*
With care ; Teetotal haivers.
Come gi'es your hand, my auld cock-laird,
Let's hear hoo ye've been fairin' ;
It's months since we last met, an', feth !
Oor freenship needs repairin'."

Then up he cowp't the mutchkin stoup,
An' filled a beaded bicker ;
First *ane*, then *twa*, an' maybe *three*,
Till I felt wondrous sicker.
Teetotaldom ! I crack'd my thoombs,
It wasna worth a docken ;
But Johnny Maut was jist the chap
A roostit throat to slocken.

An' as the blythesome' oors stole on,
His crack went rich an' rarely ;
Whilst I clear'd oot my throat, an' sang
"The wind that shakes the barley."
An' on his happy face, sae thick
The cluster'd smiles were glancin',
That wi' the rich wink o' his e'e
He pat me mair than dancin'.

An' when we raise, he took my hand,
An' warmly clapp't my shouther ;
Quo' he—"Ye see, I'm kindly-soul'd,
Though, maybe, something throu'ther."
"That's true," quo' I, "ye're sair abused,
An' muckle they misname ye ;
But sic a buirdly chap as you,
They'll bark lang ere they lame ye."

As hame I stee'rd that nicht, I claim'd
 The haill breadth o' the pavement ;
 An when I reach'd my ain stairheid,
 I thocht it an achievement.
 Till daylight's daw', across the hearth
 I like a brock lay snorin' ;
 An' heard in dreams the wifie's voice
 My sins against me scorin'.

Next mornin', when I warsl'd up,
 I search'd out ilka pocket,
 But de'il a saxpence I cood get,
 Though I for't had been chokit.
 Blythe Johnny Maut, the leein' loon,
 Had robb'd me ere I witted ;
 Then Conscience on me plied her tawse,
 An' ticht her gyve-airns fitted.

Wi' Johnny Maut, I voo'd alood,
 Nae mair wad I be trokin' ;
 To serve a freen in sic a way,
 Was jist doonricht provokin'.
 The wifie she my aith o'erheard,
 An' pray'd I lang nicht keep it ;
 The moral dyke o' whilk resolve
 I houp I'll never dreep it.

THE WRANG SIDE O' THE DOOR.

(Delicately dedicated to those whom the Shoe Fits.)

As, day by day, we fecht oor way
 Amang the stoors o' life,
 An' suffer, for the bite o' bread,
 The temper-thrawin' strife,

We sometimes see deceit an' pride,
The winnin' numbers score,
While worth an' parts are forced to tak',
The wrang side o' the door.

There's some wha deftly counterfeit,
The warm an' freenly heart,
But, Judas-like, ahint oor backs,
They act the dirty part.
An' I cood name jist *ane* or *twa*,
An', maybe, you a *score*,
Wha, an' the truth was kenn'd, wad get
The wrang side o' the door.

Sic men as these, no bother'd much
Wi' either heart or brain,
Enact the quately cunning part,
An' lee like showers o' rain ;
Their words wi' oily sauvity,
Are gilded o'er and o'er,
Lest Truth should some day gi'e their lees,
The wrang side o' the door.

But here's to Manhood's noblest flower,
An' may it blossom lang !
The manly heart wad rather burst,
Than dae a brither wrang.
An' let us hope, that sune or late,
The braid warld o'er an' o'er,
The honest heart will some day win,
The *richt* side o' the door.

THE BRAE O' LIFE.

A CLOUDY RETROSPECT.

Come lay aside your seam the nicht,
 An' sit ye doon, my auld guidwife,
 An' hear me lilt a rhyme upon
 The steep an' crooded brae o' life ;
 For though we've aye been at the foot,
 Oor hearts, I think, are hale an' weel.
 To thoosands mae beside oorsel's
 The brae o' life's been tough tae spiel.

Sae, never mind, but sit ye doon,
 We'el haud a fireside crack a wee
 On what we aiblins micht ha'e been,
 An' what we've seen, and yet may see.
 I min' it weel, when first we twa
 Resolved to meet the warl's strife,
 My hopes were high, I thocht to scale
 The tap-stane o' the brae o' life.

But fortune mend the slippery stanes !
 That pave the hill frae broo to base ;
 Wi' mony a slip, an' fash, an' fa',
 I wasted youth's resplendent days.
 An' noo auld age comes hirplin' up
 An' *hoasts*, an' asks me hoo I feel,
 I ferly much, guidwife, what maks
 The brae o' life sae hard to spiel.

There's maybe something in the brain,
 An' something in the finger-ends,
 But muckle mair in chance, I think,
 An' in the upward heeze o' friends ;
 But ae thing's certain, sure, an' clear,
 That mony a clever, noble chiel'
 Gie's up the race, an' swith declares
 Life's brae's—Auld Nick an' a' to spiel !

Observe yon spring aff manhood's tree,
Bejewell'd bricht, a dandy quite,
He walks straight up the crooded steep
Without a single fash or flyte.
E'en let him gang ! the laddie's sire's
A toon's-clerk, or some bailie chiel'.
There's aye a favour'd few that find
The brae o' life richt smooth to spiel.

There's Willie Miller*—best o' bards,
An' formed o' nature's finest clay—
Wha sang some thirty years ago
His sweet "Wee Willie Winkie" lay.
Ask him what thinks he o' life's road,
An' hoo the shanks at threescore feel.
To him, I fear, the brae o' life
Has been baith rough an' steep to spiel.

* Alas ! since the above was penned, William Miller, the sweetest and pawkiest of Scottish Lyrists, has gone to his immortal rest. Although living and toiling in comparative obscurity during the latter years of his life, it is refreshing to know that the Glasgow press did latterly ample justice to the aged bard's genius and character, public attention having been called to the poet's fatal illness by H. B. Macphail, Esq., a gentleman who had already evinced an unselfish solicitude for the welfare of local genius, by extending towards the unfortunate, but highly-gifted James Macfarlan, such acts of kindness as literally followed him into the tomb. A monument to Wm. Miller is about to be erected, I understand, in the City Necropolis, where some of the best dust of Glasgow already reposes, and where not a few of the late bard's compeers in song—the old *Whistlebinkians*—silently sleep. On another page will be found a slight, though sincere, tribute to Mr Miller's homely but delightful genius.

Or higher still, there Burns himsel',
The master o' the Scottish lyre,
Whose song-enthrall'd immortal heart,
Glow'd wi' the heaven-lighted fire.
E'en he met mony a fell mischance,
An' keen the warl's gecks did feel.
It's no the man o' biggest brain,
That best the brae o' life can spiel.

In bygane times the weaver sat
An' drave his shuttle as he sang,
Or delved his kail-yard in the sun,
Or wi' the parson argued thrang.
But noo, by jing ! frae licht to mirk,
A man's brains never aff the reel,
An' aye, frae day to day, life's brae
Is gettin' waur an' waur to spiel.

I kenna' what the end will be,
But ae thing's certain—rest we need.
The warl' some morning, sune or late,
Will wauken wi' a bizzin' heid.
What warl' wad staun't ? I'd like to ken,
Swing, swingin' like a foursome reel,
Wi' millions warslan' up the brae,
Intent the giddy peak to spiel.

They talk o' modern days, an' brag
O' what the power o' steam has dune,
An' hoo the nobly-engin'd ship,
Gangs rushin' thro' the adverse win'.
But let them brag and loudly blaw
About their mighty steam an' steel,
To us, guidwife, an' mony mair,
Life's brae grows daily waur to spiel.

The olden times restore to me
The rich auld day's that's by an' gane,
When first I bounded owre the muirs,
Wi' dancin' bluid, and birslin' brain ;
The floo'ers looked fresher then, mair bricht
An' blue the skies, than now I see !
But at the foot we've wrocht and swat,
An' at the weary foot we'll dee.

HECH ! ME, THE DAY.

*(Composed under the broad and philosophic shadow
of a Kilmarnock bonnet.)*

When sour misfortune's gurly broo
Puts on a drumlie froun,
An' presses wi' a leaden wecht
The heart-strings geylie down,
The canniest way to thole the fash,
I've heard the gutchers say,
Is jist to welcome't a', an' mair
Wi', Hech ! me, the day.

When that auld dyvour—Nickie-ben
Tak's trade fast by the lugs,
An' gies things sic a backward thraw
As drives a' to the dougs,
While we hing dowie owre the fire
Indulgin' thochts o' wae,
The guidwife, glegger, snecks the fash
Wi', Hech ! me, the day.

Or if, when pechin' up the hill,
Oor angry feelings boil,
An' bleed beneath the thorns that blur
The noble crown o' Toil.
To lift the heart abune the grudge
A wee drap aiblins may ;
But for an auld Scotch antidote
Try, Hech ! me, the day.

As roun' an' roun' the wheel o' life
Gangs swiggin' thro' the year,
It lea's some sorrow at the door
O' ilka lodger here.
We may get sun-blinks noo an' then,
But doun mischanter's brae
We a' maun trudge, an' chowe the leek
O', Hech ! me, the day.

To jouk the clutch o' ruin's grup
Some jump the river brig,
An' leave the warld their warldly a'—
A hat an' floatin' wig.
An' some pack up their duds an' loup
The law, as gleg's a flae,
While they'd grow bailie-fat at hame
Owre, Hech ! me, the day.

But, hark ye, ten o'clock or mair
Is ringin' thro' the toun,
An' sleep, the weary god, begins
To press my e'elids doun.
An' since my rhyme's worn to the bane
I think I'll close my lay,
An' ca' the nail in a' I've said
Wi', Hech ! me the day.

AULD JOHN SHANKS'S NODDY

“Another fearful railway collision occurred yesterday at Woodhouse Junction, near Sheffield,” &c., &c.—See *Daily Mail*, Saturday, Oct. 19, 1872.

Auld locomotion's twa-legg'd gig,
Since steam-power kick'd the dowp o't,
Has flitted faur benorth the hills
The haill stap an' rowp o't.
An', hech! sic steamin' screamin' days
Micht weel bumbaze a body,
Gie me a sax-mile stretch o' road
On auld John Shanks's noddy.

Your whusslin' valves an' rushin' wheels
Gude save's! they're no jist canny;
I'm much i' the same mind as her—
My auld lang-winded granny.
She jibes your rummle-tummle jaunts;
An' when she gangs abroad, aye,
Jist grups a stickie in her han'
An yokes auld Shanks's noddy.

Nae doot, your saxty miles an hour
Is something worth the boastin',
But whyles o' that sic wark is dune
As sets the law a *hoastin'*.
But gi'es the toon besouth oor backs,
An inn ayont the road, aye,
An' what can match the hamely jog
O' Shanks's safe-gaun noddy?

Life's darkest dreams can noo be read
'Neath science' flashin' port-light,
We'll sune can journey to the mune
An' back within a fortnicht.

Jist mount a lang electric wire,
An' some wee mune-licht body
Next mornin', swith, will help ye aff
Your telegraphic noddie.

An' when ye're up amang the moons
Let folks o' note be ca'd on,
Speer weel hoo Mars an' Jupiter
An' ither stars are haudin';
For orra men an' things are seen
When daft folks gang abroad, aye;
That dune, we then may tak' the wheels
Frae aff John Shanks's noddie.

THE WA'-GAUN O' THE BARD.

MEMORIAL VERSES SUGGESTED BY THE DEATH OF
WILLIAM MILLER, THE NURSERY POET.

Dust unto dust—a simple grave
Enshrouds the poet—dead!
Where tender flow'rs an' grasses sweet
Shall make his breast their bed.
Nor birds nor flow'rs could well receive,
Than he, a gentler ward.
O many, many hearts shall mourn
The wa'-gaun o' the bard.

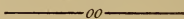
Sweet as the hedge-rose weet wi' dew,
The blinks o' love he sang,
Wi' sunny feet they wander wild
The heart-strings thro' amang;

An' many an echo wauken'd there,
In pensive moments heard,
Shall bless his gentle muse, and weep
The wa'-gaun o' the bard.

O lov'd an' widely loving soul !
O heart o' sweetest worth !
Rever'd be aye the simple spot
Where rests thy head in earth !
May long the bliss o' birds an' flow'rs
Thy sleep delight an' guard !
While we, wi' vacant hearts, regret
The wa'-gaun o' the bard.



Lyrical Pieces.



BREEKS O' HODDEN GREY.

*(Inscribed, with manly respect, to my Compeers in
Toil, the Engineers of the Clyde.)*

No pompous sound of idle words,
No cunning ring of rhyme,
Struck from some gorgeous lyre of dreams
To thrill the ears of Time,
Shall still our earnest hearts to-day ;
Be ours the nobler pride
To champion the brows of toil,
By grimey sweat-drops dyed—
The million'd mass, who, with the sun,
To daily toil arise ;
Whose volum'd smoke and thunder-sounds,
Begrime and shake the skies.
The tinsel stamps of rank and wealth,
In God's eye, what are they ?
Let's sing the honest men who wear
The breeks o' hodden grey.

These are the men of skill and craft,
And roughly moral'd worth,
Who melt and make, and build and break,
The mighty things of earth ;
Who stand the flaming forge before,
And on the shivering air
Let loose the flashing tiger—Steam—
From out his burning lair.

O, never to the vaulted heavens
Arose a grander song
Than bare-armed labour smiting deep
His thunder-throated gong.
No triumphs born of blood we claim ;
But ours the nobler fray
Of manly toil—the men who wear
The breeks o' hodden grey.

Ho ! strain your eyes, and far behold,
As in wild dreams of wine,
The steel-ribb'd engine flash and leap
And roar along the line.
God ! What impassion'd power is this,
That, blotch'd with fire and grime,
Beats down the hills of labour,
And contests the flight of Time ?
And who are they who shape its course,
Through rock-embattled shires,
Who bind and build its ribs of steel,
And feed its throbbing fires,
Who loose its panting lungs of steam,
And urge and guide its way ?
Who, but the rough-spun men who wear
The breeks o' hodden grey.

Or in the ringing yards and docks,
That line our noble Clyde,
Whose engin'd monarchs regally
A hundred oceans ride,
And bind the nations of the earth,
In commerce' golden bands ;
Giving to peoples far apart,
The grasp of hearts and hands.

See, where she lies, the mighty ship,
All ready for the leap !
Hurrah! the wedge is struck away,
She *smokes* into the deep.
Heavens! how she strains the groaning chains
That grandly her upweigh.
Now, shout ye, for the men who wear
The breeks o' hodden grey.

Let Genius, with her master voice,
In floods of starry song,
Enrich the soul with spoils of thought,
And trancé the raptur'd throng ;
But nobler music meets the ears,
And stirs the blood of men.
Where ringing hammers throb and dance,
Than roll of lyric pen,
And grander fire-gems leap to life,
Than all the vaunted stars,
When, crash, the mighty steam blow falls,
And welds the burning bars.
The golden-thoughted flash of brain,
Applaud it as ye may,
Is chaff beside the men who wear
The breeks o' hodden grey.

Then, hush'd for aye, be idle words,
Or fancied ring of rhyme,
Struck from the lofty lyre of dreams
To storm the ears of Time ;
To kindred souls leave tawdry themes ;
Be ours the nobler pride
To champion the brows of toil,
By honest sweat-drops dyed—

The million'd mass, who, with the sun,
To daily toil arise ;
Whose volum'd smoke and thunder-sound
Begrim and shake the skies.
The tinsel stamps of rank and wealth,
In God's eye, what are they ?
But ring the air for those who wear
The breeks o' hodden grey.

SCOTLAND'S LAURELL'D THREE.

(WALLACE, KNOX, AND BURNS.)

Auld Scotland, wi' her sturdy heart,
As tough as hempen twine,
Surveys whiles wi' a mither's pride,
Her fame-emblazon'd line ;
And ever wi' a dauntless brow,
Her eye, bold-flashin' turns
To her heroic *three*, my lads—
To Wallace, Knox, and Burns.

The *first*, he dared the tyrant's power,
And wi' his tartan plaid,
For dear auld Scotland's sake, his bed
Upon her hillsides made ;
And wild and well that gallant tale,
The Scottish heart enthrals,
How he thrash'd haughty Cressingham,
By Stirling's banner'd walls.

The *second*, wi' his brawny fist,
The wooden image smote,
And on the nation's shrivell'd heart,
The Christ of worship wrote,
And grandly his disciples dared,
The freeman's holy fight—
The Bible in their left hand clasp'd,
The sword-hilt in their right.

And lastly, regal Robert Burns,
One of the million'd throng,
Inhaled the breeze of God, bare-brow'd,
Upon the hills of song ;
And, lo ! at mention of his name,
The stirring crowds of men
Walk prouder 'neath the noble thrall,
Of his immortal pen.

O, never from the scroll of fame,
Nor from the light of day,
If we have Scottish hearts shall these—
Our kings—be torn away ;
Nay, brothers, nay, but rather pray,
Upon the nation's brow
The hand of Time, from age to age,
May write their names as now.

Thank God ! the heart of Scotland yet,
Is with her valiant past,
When freedom fought with tyranny,
And dared death to the last ;
And while the heather clothes our hills,
The thistle guards our plains,
The fame of her immortal *three*,
Shall thrill our Scottish veins.

MINSTREL ROBIN.

AN ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE.

Our Monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-an'-twenty days begun ;
'Twas then a blast o' Januar win'
Blew handsel in on Robin.—*Burns.*

A hundred years by-gane, or mair,
Auld canty Mither Nature,
Sat at the spinning-wheel o' life,
Wi' fun-enamell'd feature.
Whir-ir, whir-ir, tu-whoo, tu-whoo,
Richt blythely bumm'd the bobbin,
An' spun a sturdy stalk o' hemp,
An' wha was this but—Robin.

O, Robin was a famous wicht,
An' lang may Scotland daut him ;
Gude bless the day he saw the licht,
An' shame fa' them wad faut him.

A nobler gift it gied to men,
That brucket "auld clay biggin',"
Than e'er was born in princely ha',
Or hames o' lordly riggin'.
When Nature stamps the man a king,
Nae crown needs she to gie him ;
She clasps the trade-mark on his brow,
An' sends her patent wi' him.

Ay, Robin was a sterling wicht,
An' Scotland weel may daut him ;
A better never saw the licht,
Though unco folks wad faut him.

What though he thraw'd the law a wee,
An' bann'd the reverend gentry ;
His breast wi' feelings rich an' warm,
Was aye a weel-stow'd pantry.
The heart that mourn'd the hameless mouse,
An' sang the simple daisy,
Shall proudly cap the tapmost stane
On Fame's immortal braes aye.

For Robin was nae common wicht,
An' Scotland loves to daut him ;
He dipped her tartan plaid in licht,
An' whaur's the loon wad faut him?

Heaven scatters broad her gifts to men,
Her prophets, an' her preachers ;
But while we honour them, let's bless
Oor ballad-makin' teachers.
Your philosophic facts and forms
Put plain folks in a swither ;
But blessin's on the heartie sangs
That weld us a' thegither.

An' Robin was a ballad wicht,
Faith, puir folks weel may dauthim ;
He sang the wrangs o' labour richt,
An' wha wad dare to faut him.

Where'er by foreign flood or fell
The Scottish footstep wanders ;
Be't whaur Niagara taks loup,
Or classic Rhine meanders.
Abune their voice, an' far within
His benmost nook o' feelin',
The pensive flow o' Bonnie Doon
An' Auld Langsyne is stealin'.

Ay, Robin was a singin' wicht,
An' lasses lo'ed to daut him;
He dyed their locks in ballad licht,
An' deil a sumph could faut him.

O, broadly o'er the earth is blown,
By Fame's immortal tabor,
The magic name o' him wha gave
The laurell'd wreath to labour.
An' lang may Scotland next her heart
His sturdy manhood cherish,
An' lash the hirelings hip and thigh
Wha'd see her honour perish.

For Robin was a noble wicht,
An' weel may Scotland daut him;
He sang the wrangs o' mankind richt,
An' Time shall never faut him.

SCOTLAND AN' HER THISTLE-TAP.

I turn'd the weeder clips aside,
An' spared the thistle dear.—*Burns.*

The rose may blow on English ground,
An' green on Erin's Isle
The shamrock spread her spray of leaves,
A symbol o' the soil;
But we, the sons o' valiant sires,
As they heroic did,
For Scotland an' her thistle-tap
Shall aye stand guid.

O, rare upon her mountain heights
The healthy heather grows,
An' broad upon the bracin' breeze
A sturdy fragrance throws ;
An' keen her roar an' pour o' floods
Heroic twangs the bluid—
For Scotland an' her thistle-tap
Wha wadna stan' guid ?

On Bannockburn's immortal field,
An' God-inspired Drumclog,
Our ancestors gied tyranny
A weel-remembered shog ;
An' the high pride that then was ours,
To-day can ill be hid—
For Scotland an' her thistle-tap
We'll aye stan' guid.

A hundred years ago, or mair,
A kintra lad was born,
Wha sang o' manhood's kingly worth,
An' held its faes in scorn.
The Muse, when first she gifted him,
Said, " Rab ! noo, mind your muid ;
For Scotland's thistle-tap o' tow
Ye'll aye stand guid."

An' aye the words he bore in mind,
An' on the brow o' time
Endorsed the glory o' her name
Wi' radiant stars o' rhyme.
An' weel the world's tinsel shows
His halesome muse withstuid ;
For Scotland an' her thistle-flower
He aye cam' guid.

Awa' wi' denty chirms o' love,
 Whase chime the fancy thrills ;
 Let's sing the floods that leap the crags
 An' roar amang the hills.
 The hearts, 'gainst tyrant wrangs wad stan'
 A rampant pyramid ;
 Sic hearts, for Scotland's sturdy richts,
 Shall aye stan' guid.

HABBIE, THE LAIRD.

Blythe Habbie, the Laird, cam' aft doun the glen
 Ae nicht when the March win's were blawin';
 He wasna the youngest nor steyst o' men,
 An' ill tholed the blast an' the snawin'.
 His plooghin' an' seedin' ayont the glen heid
 At their briskest he managed to plan, aye,
 Sae glegly as gied him an hours's guid remeid
 To push his daft suit wi' young Annie,
 Auld fule,
 The toast o' the parish—sweet Annie.

The munewasdroon'd oot, an' the snaw-swirlin' storm
 Whussel't roun' him aye wilder and thicker,
 But Habbie jist grippit his stick the mair firm,
 An' planted his fitstaps the sicker.
 Nae idle romancin's ere bother'd his heid;
 Ghaists and deid-lichts ! gang tell't to your grannie.
 There wasna a bogle frae Clydeside to Tweed
 Cood fricht him when gaun to see Annie;
 Stan' back !
 He was fu' o' heroicks owre Annie.

"I'm lithesome an' blythesome," the auld bodie
 thocht,
 As wastwards he teuchly crapt till her,
 An', hooly, sirs, hooly, he wi' him had brocht
 A stocking weel, padded wi' siller;
 For lovers, the Laird voo'd, wha courted loof-bare,
 A chance o' discomfiture ran, aye;
 So he brocht wi'm—croon pieces—twa guid pounds
 an' mair,
 To buy a silk dress to young Annie.
 Ha! ha!
 'Twad coft him a kiss frae sweet Annie.

The gloamin' owre nature her grey plaid had flang
 As Habbie cam' hobblin' in view, O.
 Baldy White has gaen under the bed wi' a bang,
 An' I houp, Laird, your Annie's quite true, O.
 But in staps blythe Habbie, and sits himsel' down,
 An', by an' bye, quately and canny
 He scarts oot his stockin' clean o' the last croon,
 An' hands owre the hail o't to Annie.
 My fegs!
 The best nicht gang sib noo to Annie.

"An' when will we buckle—us twa?" asked the Laird;
 "Name the day ye'll come east to my ingle."
 In his snug place o' hiding the crack Baldy heard,
 An' his heart-strings for mischief 'gan tingle;
 So he crap frae his hidin' close on the Laird's chair,
 An' nearer an' nearer he wan, aye;
 Then, 'Odsake! he heighted him high in the air,
 An' gied him the left wheel frae Annie,
 Clean roun',
 An' clinkit himsel' down by Annie.

When Willie was fuddled, his tongue waggit free.

Gae search ancient Scotland—the near and the
faur o't,

There wasna anither could hammer like he,

When straucht in his senses, or e'en when the
waur o't.

Briskly the waur o't,

His blows fell like lichtnin' when three gills the
waur o't.

But Willie's guid wifie was nae timid lamb,

She rail'd at the drink, an' the fash breedin' scaur o't.

Sayin' "deil to the day that ye get a bit dram,

But ye maun come rowin' hame bockin the waur o't;

Lip-fou the waur o't.

Roarin' an' singin' fou, tichtly the waur o't.

"Shame on yer wrang doings, ye stippit auld fule,

Yer honour's gaen doun an' yer nail'd to the spaur o't;

Frae the rise o' the year to the fa' o't at yule,

It's naething but drinkin' till ye are the waur o't.

Thochtless the waur o't—

Tasting an' tipplin' till rag tag the waur o't."

"Noo wheesht ye, noo wheesht ye, ye stoorie auld
dame,

An' blame na the dram, nor the fash breedin'
scaur o't;

That nicht I gat married an' cleekit ye hame,

A' that week I was drinkin' and mortal the waur o't;

Blin'-fou the waur o't.

Faith! ye buckled me nicely when I was the waur o't."

BRING THE BODIE BEN.

A laird comes coortin' here the nicht,
 To wale frae oot the lave
 A mountain flower to be his bride—
 A laird o' means—Gude save!
 He's auld a wee, but hale and fier,
 Scarce fourscore, savin' ten;
 Then, steer aboot, ye stoorie jauds,
 And bring the bodie ben.

Your warld o' love withoot the wee
 Bit yellow coin, I troo,
 Is but a thorny wilderness
 To stoit an' stagger thro';
 Then seek ye aye a stockit purse,
 An' bienly-clad fire-en'.
 Gae brush aboot an' redd the house,
 An bring the bodie ben.

The laird, they say, has taurry sheep,
 And owsen by the score,
 Wi' acres braid o' fallow land,
 An' corn-riggs to the fore;
 An', heh! it's no a common day,
 A laird comes here, ye ken;
 Then get your braws, an' look your best,
 And bring the bodie ben.

Ca' Bessie in frae 'mang the kye,
 An' pouter up her hair,
 An' stick her newest kame abun't,
 A hand-braid high an' mair;
 For she's a stieve an' sturdy lass,
 Wad mak' a noble fen;
 Then busk her weel, steer up the fire,
 And bring the bodie ben.

They brocht him ben, an' sat him doun
Before a weel-spread buird
(O richtly gangs the kebbuck doon
That's hansell'd wi' a laird;
And richly reams the jug o' ale,
When cantilee, ye ken,
There's hiding at the bottom o't,
A lairdie's but-an'-ben).

The laird he made himself at hame,
An' drank his liquor weel,
An' aye he cut the tither slice
Frae aff the kebbuck heel;
Ay, Bess was braw, and Meg an' Kate
Were won'drous sweet; but then
The laird had ither fish to fry
When he cam' stappin' ben.

Though Bess was braw, an' Meg was fair,
An' Kate was orra sweet,
There wasna ane o' a' the three
Could move the laird a wheet.
He's birl'd a guinea in his luif
An' won the wale o' ten,
An's awa wi' the youngest flower
To deck his but-an'-ben.

Noo, what will a' the young lads dae
Sin' Nannie's taen the laird?
To slicht sae mony dautin' hearts,
Was e'er the like o't heard?
An' jilted Watty o' the hill—
When he comes yont the glen.
My fegs! he'll scauld the auld guidwife
That brocht the bodie ben.

THE WIFE-BEGUNKIT MAN.

A Fireside Lilt.

I wonder what was in my heid
 The day that I gat married;
 My reason, sure, was daupit-blin',
 Sae far the jaud miscarried.
 To dree the fashious plagues o' hame
 When work is owre I carenae;
 But aye it's "Sandy, steer the pat,
 Or tak' the greetin' bairnie."

O, it's haud the wean! steer the pat!
 That's what it's late an' early;
 'Tween stoorie-woorie wife an' weans,
 Wow! but I'm corner'd fairly.

The day that I gaed stumpin' up
 To Hymen's kittle altar
 My heart kept up an even beat
 Withoot ae fash or falter.
 "O, it's love will tak' a turn an' cool,"
 Sang my far-seein' grannie,
 "Then, Sandy, dinna reest an' loup,
 But stap it oot fou cannie."

Och! haud the wean! steer the pat!
 What love can lang endure it?
 To keep baith wean an' spurkle gaun
 Sic fash wad feckly sour it.

I little thocht that I wad leeve
 To thole sic sturt an' strifie,
 The tichtest knot a man e'er tied
 Is takin' o' a wife.

The law mak's guid the kittle knot,
 The minister he chows it,
 An' sic a fankled heid is wrocht,
 The deil he couldna louse it.

Here, haud the wean! steer the pat!
 Is that the breid that's burnin'?
 I ferlie what ye're thinkin' on,
 Come, gie the cakes a turnin'.

Auld Socrates, the gudgie Greek,
 Took wife to mend his trouble;
 She had a raucle o' a tongue,
 An' made his fashes double.
 Like ither fules, the married life,
 Thinks I, I'll blythely try it;
 I'll tak' a wife, an' sae I did,
 But a' that e'er cam' by it—

Was, haud the wean! steer the pat!
 An' mak' a willin' fend o't;
 But saftly, wife, or by my fegs
 The law will see the end o't.

MY YOWE AN' MY LAMB.

When I was a lodger in Poverty's lap,
 An' waddled through life wi' a win'-shaven hap,
 The hail o' my haudin an' warldly plack
 Button'd beneath the coat on my back,
 Gentility's laws are sae nicely obeyed,
 Naebody minded the road I gaed;
 But noo, that I've got a yowe an' a lamb,
 Ilka ane says—"Guid mornin', Tam."

To learning I never made muckle pretence,
 But whiles I stick up for a blinkie o' sense;
 The corn riggs kittle the farmer's e'e—
 The fisherman aye thinks weel o' the sea.
 An' whiles the queer thocht in my noddle gets room,
 That the wee bit saxpence under my thoomb,
 An' added to that, my yowe an' my lamb,
 Ha'e something to dae wi'—"Guid mornin', Tam."

"Guid mornin' Tam;" "Oo, ay, laird, I'm here;
 But hoo is't ye didna ken me last year?
 I've met ye repeatedly doun in the gaet,
 An' thocht ye prood stammack'd an' wonderfu' blate;
 But, noo, I'm in ferlies to see ye sae free—
 A lairdie to crack wi' the likes o' me!
 Hech! wha wad hae thocht that a yowe an' a lamb
 Wad ha'e coft me a laird's—"Guid mornin', Tam?"

Last Sunday, as into the kirkie I stapp'd,
 An elder my shouther richt canillie clapp'd,
 Sheuk han's, an' quite solemnly ca'd me his "brither;"
 But he's wrang there—us twa had a different mither.
 An' the minister, too, as he gaed through his prayers,
 Doucely open'd the tail o' his e'e—unawares;
 An' thinkin', nae doot, on my yowe an' my lamb,
 Slyly wink'd me a canny—"Guid mornin', Tam."

Then there's Jenny, the widow, doun-bye in the glen,
 Wha's unca ran after by bachelor men;
 Last winter, when diggin' oot owre the brae scaur,
 My picturesque breeches a' daubit wi' glaur,
 Gif her in the bye-gaun I happen'd tae meet—
 She gied me the faur awa side o' the street;
 But noo—mony thanks to my yowe an' my lamb—
 She cuists me a lovin'—"Guid mornin', Tam."

Noo, Jenny, they say's, a rale capital catch,
 An' wad mak', or I'm cheatit, a brag o' a match.
 A sow, a kail-yairdie, an' twa crummie kye
 Are no to be laugh'd at, or spak lichtlie by.
 Sae I think I maun shortly, for guid or for ill,
 Jist whussle my mind in her lug—'deed, I will,
 The laird, then, o' mair than a yowe an' a lamb
 I'll gang in for a double—"Guid mornin', Tam."

THE FIRESIDE FECHT ;

OR, A' ABOOT OOR WIFE'S AULD BONNET.

As ae nicht roun oor auld lum-heid,
 The wintry win's were blawin', O,
 An' slates an' tiles an' chimla cans
 Uncannily were fa'in', O,
 My fancy gied a kittle loup
 An' chirm'd a wee sae thrang on't, O,
 Quo' I, "Guidwife, this stormy win',
 I think I'll mak' a sang on't, O."

"A sang," quo' she, an' gowf'd my heid,
 "Ye're never but ye're singin', O ;
 My lugs, as wi' a clash o' bells,
 Wi' rhymes are ever ringin', O.
 Sae mony crowd Parnassus brae,
 The list I think could spare ye, O ;
 An' sometimes when ye daut the muse,
 The wean wad better sair ye, O."

“Noo, haud yer tongue, ye tousie jaud.
 Is that the way ye’d use me, O ?
 Whilst ithers praise my graphic muse,
 Ye thochtlessly abuse me, O.
 To quate your tongue, I’ll ban my lyre,
 An’ bury e’en the name o’t, O ;
 But gin I’m quarrell’d for the deed,
 Ye’ll ken wha’ll stan’ the blame o’t, O.”

“The blame.” quo’ she, “It’s unca sma’;
 The blame wad lie upon it, O ;
 But wha’s tae blame, I’d like to ken,
 For my auld fashioned bonnet, O ?
 It’s nine years oot o’ date an’ mair,
 An’ deil, as I sood say it, O,
 I’ve oot in braid daylight to gang,
 An’ mak’ my markets wi’ it, O.”

“Noo, haud ye, Mirr’n, a weeock there,
 An’ conscience, dinna spurn it, O ;
 Gin that ye’re bonnet’s oot o’ date,
 Economy says, turn it, O.”
 “Turn it,” quo’ she, “ye daupit fule,
 “The auld thing’s turn’d already, O.”
 “Aweel, jist turn it back again,
 Ye’re no a born leddy, O.”

Wi’ that upsprang oor auld guidwife,
 An’ seiz’d a stoot kail laidle, O.
 Quo’ she, “Guidman, for what ye said,
 I’ll briskly gar ye paidle, O.”
 “Fair play,” quo’ I, an’ grup’d the tangs—
 The kindly fates defend us, O !
 When by guid chance a neebor wife
 Cam’ stappin’ in to mend us, O.

Noo, wha wad thocht sae big a stoor
Had sic a wee beginnin', O.
Sometimes a wordie spak in haste
Brings twenty roun' it spinnin', O.
We canna guard oor tongues owre weel,
Or padlock them owre doughty, O—
A hunder-wecht o' airn chains
Sood tie them when they're towtie, O.

'Twas weel for me the neebor wife
Cam' timely in to chack us, O.
The deil destroy the laidle sticks
When wifie's wad attack us, O.
But for the Muse, I'll her forswear,
An' ban baith sang an' sonnet, O,
An' closer stick to daily toil,
That Mirr'n may get her bonnet, O.

THE MINISTER KISS'D THE COBBLER'S WIFE.

Hae ye heard o' the wonderfu' tale that's gaun roun'
The tongue-waggin' gentry o' Kinghorn toun?
The like o't was ne'er before heard o' in Fife—
The minister kiss'd the cobbler's wife.

It wisna scrimp dune, but baith haill and intack—
A legible, tangible, lip-rapping smack;
Sic doings play "slap" on the left lug o' life,
A *minister* kissin' a cobbler's wife.

Auld Watty, they say, has gaen owre to the dram,
 An' mad wi' the thocht o't has drunk himsel' calm;
 The toun wi' the talk o't is jist bizzin' rife—
 The reverend kiss o' the cobbler's wife.

Had it been some stray bodie o' common degree—
 A lawyer, a laird, or a sinner like me—
 It wadna been cuttin' oor lugs like a knife;
 Och! a minister cuddlin' a cobbler's wife.

Did I see it mysel'?—weel, I didna jist see't,
 But rumour has got it, an' a' are agree't;
 That the auld preachin' bodie had tuk a daft flyfe,
 An' kiss'd in the by-gaun the cobbler's wife.

There's some ane, I'll sweer it, wi' up-casted loof,
 Hauds fast i' the tail o' their e'e the haill proof;
 'Twill be guid an' the end o't is merely word-strife,
 The kissin' o' Kate, the cobbler's wife.

TWA-THIRDS FOU.

*(A Scotch Sang wi' a blythe beginning an' an
 owre-true endin'.)*

Life's cross roads hae mony bit blinkies o' bliss,
 But few o' them finer or sweeter than this—
 Forgather'd wi' freen'ships lang-stan'in' an' true,
 A' bizzin' an' fizzin' at twa-thirds fou;
 Twa-thirds fou
 Wi' them that we lo'e,
 The tap o' life's toorie is twa-thirds fou.

When differs domestic hae ruff'd the mind,
 An' snelly misfortunes blaw thick i' the wind,
 An' oor moral barometer's sunken an' doon,
 It heezes the heartie a mile owre the moon,

Twa-thirds fou

Wi' them that we lo'e,

It lichts us an' brichts us, sweet twa-thirds fou.

Gae tell't to the miser, a-coontin' his store;
 An' tell't to the bookworm, yellow wi' lore;
 An' tell the kirk minister, deep in his prayers,
 That the brilliant dissolvent o' life's ravell'd cares

Is twa-thirds fou

Wi' them that we lo'e;

The blatest grow blythesome when twa-thirds fou.

But saftly, my chanter; life's stereoscope slides
 Hae seldom gat less than twa opposite sides;
 Sae oot wi' the truth, an' the truth maun be tauld,
 To speak it I'm doonricht teetotally bauld.

Blythe twa-thirds fou!

Toom purse and thin broo

Is aften the end o' ye, twa-thirds fou.

TIBBIE AN' HER WEE DRAP TODDY.

I sing o' twa, the talk o' many—
 Sic twa, may luck oor fireside sen' aye—
 Twa freens, bricht e'd an' warm-hearted,
 Wha wadna, hap what like, be parted.
 Like Hielan' folks, an' mountain heather,
 The pair were wond'rous fond o' ither;
 An' gree't jist like ae single bodie—
 Blythe Tibbie an' her cup o' toddy.

Noo Tibbie, a' her bustlin' lifie,
Had been a splashin' washer wifie;
What's mair, Tib ne'er had ance been married,
But ticht and square her maidship carried.
The men, she didna care aboot them,
She better fenn'd, she thocht, without them;
Sae, jibed an' jeer'd the wee wing'd god, aye,
An' clung to single bliss—an' toddy.

Altho' Tib wisna jist teetotal,
She didna much admire the bottle,
An' never drank sae awfu' fou that
Ower mornin' heidaches she wad rue that;
But nichtly, when her toils were ended,
A wee drap a' her fashes mended;
An' thus, it faurer spread abroad, aye,
That Tib was never dry o' toddy.

Ae nicht, when late, auld Rab the miller,
In mellow mood, cam' rappin' till her—
“'Od, Tib, lass, hoo's yer heid an' heartie—
A buxom grip ye are, ma certie!
Come, Tib, let's hear your honest swithers
'Gainst takin' o' a man, like ithers;
I class it maist peculiar odd, aye,
That ye sood singly mix yer toddy.

“Consider, woman, what your loosin',
By thus persistently refusin'
Sic chiels as me, whase weekly wage, aye,
Wad haud ye in as snug a cage, aye,
As ever lintie sat an' cheep'd in,
Or ootside sparrow hungry peep'd in.
Fling up your tub, your suds, an' soda,
An' share wi' me your e'enin' toddy.

Tib naething spak', but sat and thocht on't,
An' swat hersel', sae much she wrocht on't.
The bare thocht o' an auld man wooer
Like stoun's o' pain gaed through and through her.
At last, wi' leers an' sly winks many,
She whisper'd in his lug fou' cannie—
"Gang hame, across the bog, auld bodie,
There's mair than you wad share my toddy."

BOTHWELL BRIG.

O the sun shines bricht on bonnie Bothwellhaugh,
An' the birds chant the green woods amang;
But the men o' the Covenant are scatter'd an' awa',
Whase Bible-worship was their only wrang.
The glens an' the valleys shall echo never mair
The hoarse trooper's shout an' battle clang,
For silent noo for aye is the hillman's prayer,
An' the voices that gaed up to God in sang.

Down chasms deep an' dread, by mighty thunder split'
Where roars the everlastin' mountain flood,
On the forehead o' the rocks their deathless names
are writ,
In characters o' fire an' o' blood.

An' high amang the clouds, on the taps o' the hills,
Where the snaws an' win's o' winter rudely drave,
A refuge they sought frae a tyranny o' ills,
An' fand there a heaven an' a grave.

Though the airm o' the Lord is slow to rise in wrath,
Yet vengeance, He says, will I keep;
An' woe betide the hands that put the saints to death
On Bothwellhaugh an' Aird's moss wha sleep.

O purple ran the heath on Bothwell's bluidy day,
An' lang, lang gleam'd red in rain an' sun;
But the earth an' the skies, frae Clyde bank to brae,
Shall witness to the slaughter that day done.

BLIGHTED LOVE.

O, wha can heal the heart o' love,
That bleeds in sad despair?
Can kindly words or tears remove
The thorn that rankles there?
O, weary, weary fa' the hours
That's gi'en to grievin's sair,
An' joyless a' things to the heart,
That aye maun sorrow wear.

Ah, gentle Clyde, thy tender stream
Was once beloved by me;
But now thou flow'st a voiceless dream,
A sad, sweet memorie.
I canna bear to see thee shine,
Nor hear thy waters flow;
Thou mind'st me o' the dear sweet time,
Three harvest moons ago.

The lambkins on the simmer lea,
The linties on the spray,
Are happy in their little loves,
Through a' the sunny day.
But I maun wander sad my lane,
An' dree a weary load,
Till death shall kindly rest my heid,
Beneath the daisied sod.

So sang a maid in mournfu' strains,
While fell the blindin' tears,
Unconscious that the tender plaint,
Was heard by mortal ears.
The spring had fleck'd the lea wi' floo'rs,
While thus she wail'd an' wept,
But ere the autumn days were dune,
In death's cauld airms she slept.



SONNETS.

—00—

MILTON.

—

“—Much yet remains to do ;

Peace hath her victories not less renowned than war.”

—

Milton ! of men the noblest and the best ;
Of song-crown'd souls the most divinely-dower'd,
Whose faith in God shone like a lamp high-tower'd,
Light-giving in an age of dark unrest.
I think of thee right glad and often, lest
The faith that is within me should die out,
And the vast *incubus* of eyeless doubt
Lodge in my soul an uninvited guest.
For surely in this faithless age we need
Remembrance of thy grand strong life to wed
Our souls to holy duty, that the dead
And barren soil thereof may take the seed
Of nobler life, and find diviner growth
In the broad fields of thought and action both.

MAZZINI.

A column'd power has fallen to the ground,
 A mighty glory perish'd from the skies,
 The splendour of whose soul-deeds smote the eyes,
 And shook the world with immortal sound.
 Mazzini ! exil'd patriot ! uncrown'd
 Up-builder of the liberties of man,
 And fearless leader of the thankless van :
 In thee *Italia*, and the world, found
 Their soul-ideal—stainless, massive, grand :
 The scroll of thy long life-work—bright and broad—
 Bears the recorded signature of God,
 Traced by a lightning-flashing, angel-hand ;
 Pillow'd upon thy Country's weeping breast,
 Return, immortal hero, to thy rest.

DAVID GRAY.*

A song unsung, a fragrant flower unblown,
 A morning sunbeam clouded ere the noon,
 A breath of brilliant music silenced soon ;
 Such tearful loss in thee, alas ! we own,
 O rich-voiced singer, making thy sweet moan
 On the immortal lyre-strings of the heart,
 The pages of thy soul-birth'd song o'erblown
 With the sweet fruits of early-blossom'd art.

* David Gray, a native of Kirkintilloch, and a young man of rare lyrical faculty, died there in his twenty-fourth year. The productions of his early muse are characterised by grace rather than strength, but there is enough of promise in the book to warrant his accomplished biographer—Mr James Hedderwick—in forecasting the youthful poet a brilliant future, had he been permitted to enjoy maturity of years.

All that is bright and beautiful and fair,
Sea, skies, green woods, white snows, sun-glancing
streams,
Were voiced and imaged in thy tender dreams,
Clear-worded, as the bright and ambient air;
And on thy soul's fair mirror, the sweet grace
Of all things lovely held a shining place.

JAMES LITTLE.*

He came among us, pouring from his lips
The burning music of an earnest soul,
That builds on hope, and faints not till life's whole
Is curtain'd o'er with death's sublime eclipse.
In duty strong, in truth heroical,
He walked the earth a fameless son of song;
A rude wild flower, in odorous feeling strong,
Coarse in the leaf, yet beautiful withal.
Sweet was his lyre when love's soft south wind blew
Among the chords, and low reprisals brought,
And strong-tongued when the gusts of passion threw
His soul into the frenzy of high thought.
I mourn his end, yet hope is not denied,
For Mercy clung to God when hapless Little died.

* James Little, author of a meritorious volume, entitled "Sparks from Nature's Fire," was a working shoemaker in the Calton. His father was, through his maternal grandmother, a claimant for the title and estate of the last Marquis of Annandale. He was eight years in the military service, and twice visited America—once in a private capacity, and once under his country's colours. His verses are characterised by pith and manly sense, but it is painful to know that he latterly acquired habits of dissipation, and died by his own hand—Feb. 1865.

TOWN *VERSUS* COUNTRY.

Poets have sung in many a pleasing strain,
 The bliss of country life, as all in all,
 And much I love at evening to recall
 Their well-rhymed memories of field and plain.
 I question not th' apparent loss or gain,
 The seeming virtue felt or only feigned ;
 A dweller in the City—narrow-laned ;
 I only know that in my shaken brain
 The roar of her vast life makes mightier moan,
 And with a sense of deeper meaning fills,
 Than Ocean, breaking on her bed of stone,
 Or bolted thunder heard among the hills ;
 And grandlier breathe I where my senses greet
 The throb of hearts, and myriad fall of feet.

 BANNOCKBURN.

War is not less a blessing than a curse ;
 The virtue of it lives—the evil dies ;
 Great battle-fields doth evermore imburse
 Earth with the seeds of her best liberties ;
 The issues of unfolding prophecies
 Leap into being with the shock and shout
 Of mighty battle, and red-hoof'd from out
 Her loins spring immortal destinies.
 Thus reason'd I, as from the castle crag
 Of grey old Stirling look'd I down upon
 The carse of Bannockburn—the battle-brag
 Of Scotland, hearing not the anguish'd moan
 Of her slain dead, but only seeing there
 A mighty answer to a nation's prayer.

THE HILLS—A STUDY.

The city sinks behind me, and before,
The mighty hills in endless line arise,
And veil their tawny foreheads 'mid the skies,
In earth firm-rooted, steadfast evermore.
Heaven leans upon their summits, and the roar
Of ocean old is round their giant base ;
Their breasts enfold earth's fires; the brown haze
Of buried ages wraps them o'er and o'er.
O that to my unstable soul was lent
The strength and calm that to yon hills belong
Their inspirations with my purpose blent,
That naught less mighty, less immensely strong,
Might nerve me to the high accomplishment
Of some immortal, world-shaking song.

UNRECORDED HEROISM.

Earth's mighty heroes and prophetic sages—
The master-souls who king it o'er the throng—
Are, evermore, devoutly shrin'd in song,
To be a theme of worship for all ages ;
And right it is that the immortal pages
Of earth's historic record should be graced
With all that worship of the heart engages—
With all that's lovely in this moral waste.
But yet, among us, noble deeds are done,
Within the quiet walks of daily duty,
That never blossom into open beauty,
But court the shade, unmindful of the sun ;
Whose seeds would find, if planted deep and strong,
Immortal rootage in the fields of song.

ANTICIPATORY.

I.

I long'd to live upon the breath of fame,
To feast upon her sweets without alloy ;
And years went round and recognition came,
But with it came not hope, nor peace, nor joy—
The fire of thought still burn'd within my brain ;
A sea of discontent within my soul
Rag'd wide and limitless, without control ;
And still existence beat a pulse of pain.
The sea, the sky, the hills, the russet-plain
Were round about me, and I sought to trace
The lineaments of God, and learn his grace,
In Nature's mystic temple ; but the rain
That fell from heaven—the wind that shook the tree
Spoke with no voice oracular to me.

II.

Then said I to my soul, "Dear soul, full surely
Thy erring reason hath miscarried thee ;
God dwells not in the land, the sky, the sea ;
But rather in the heart he dwelleth purely.
Where'er a deed of charity is done,
Where'er a word of holy truth is spoken,
Where'er a pray'r is utter'd as a token
Of faith in God, that moment God is won.
Choose then, my soul, the wisdom that relieth
On the necessity of praise and prayer ;
Nor further invoke the dreamless air ;
No voice of revelation it supplieth.
In Christ, all mystery is undisguis'd,
In Christ, the abstract God is humaniz'd."

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